EXAMINING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' CULTURALLY PROFICIENT PRACTICES: FROM SELF AWARENESS TO COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Baltimore, Maryland
December 2020

Abstract

School administrators have different levels of skills, experience, and motivation to examine how their leadership practices increase opportunities to improve outcomes for diverse student populations. This mixed methods study of public school principals and assistant principals, investigated if participation in a professional learning (PL) increased their culturally proficient leadership practices. Due the global pandemic, the PL was wholly online with five synchronous sessions and asynchronous reflections in a three-week period in the summer.

The theories guiding this study are ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991)), and the essential elements of cultural proficiency (Cross, et al.,1989). The researcher developed a survey for a needs assessment and used the Culturally Proficient Leadership Survey, for the pre-and post-intervention measure. Qualitative data were collected from written responses to reflective prompts, open-ended questions, and chat box comments, as well as transcripts from the PL sessions. The data from the pre-and post-surveys indicated increases on four subscales: (a) assessing culture, (b) inclusiveness, (c) valuing diversity, and (d) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Additionally, the researcher identified items in the survey for the themes of cultural competence, equity, and social justice and the analysis illuminated increases in practices in these areas as well.

Findings from the qualitative data indicate the following components of the intervention supported the participants' learning: (a) critical self-reflection, (b) examining a cultural proficiency leadership rubric, (c) learning about systemic barriers and privilege through experiential activities, (d) practicing conversations about race and racism, and (e) participating in learning cohorts with other principals and assistant principals. Lastly, collective efficacy was built among the participants through experiencing cognitive dissonance and growing from

discomfort, engaging in perspective-taking and increasing empathy, and having the opportunity to learn from their peers in which they co-created the brave space to be authentic and vulnerable.

Keywords: school administrators, cultural proficient leadership, cultural competence, racial identity development, equity, social justice, ecological systems theory, transformative learning, collective efficacy

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JOHNS HOPKINS
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Dissertation Approval Form

Student's Name: Razia F. Kosi Date: 11-17-20

Dissertation Title:

Examining School Administrators' Culturally Proficient Practices-From Self Awareness to

The student has made all necessary revisions, and we have read, and approve this dissertation for submission to the Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree.

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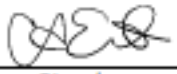
Dr. Christina Eith		11-17-20
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Jafar Ali, who envisioned his granddaughter would someday attain a doctorate, even when girls in our Indian village did not have equitable access to education. To my grandmother, Jalilnissa, who loved me unconditionally, and encouraged her only daughter and to leave home so her grandchildren would have different opportunities. To my parents, Abdul Gaffour and Niloufer, who instilled in me the value education while grounding me with roots to our culture. To my husband, David, who supported and encouraged me to achieve my goals, and to our children, Jacob Ali and Mandira, who inspire me to live my values with a loving heart, deep compassion, and bold commitment for positive change.

Acknowledgements

My gratitude for the wisdom and guidance from my co dissertation advisors, Dr. Karen Karp and Dr. Wendy Osefo, and to Dr. Ranjani JohnBull and Dr. Chrissie Eith, also members of my dissertation committee who shared their expertise and passion for my study. To the friends I made in our cohort, thank you Nancy Newton, Sheneka Balogum, Earl Turner, Sarah Buck, Jackie Muldrow, Casey Schurman, and Erica Carswell. A special thanks to Dr. Sharon Mistretta for your technical savvy and willingness to help.

To the professional network of leaders who shared their expertise and tools with me. Dr. Hines and Dr. Kritsonis, Dr. Franco, Dr. Robles, and Dr. Otts. To my mentors, Drs. Brenda and Franklin CampbellJones, I deeply appreciate what I have learned from both of you and our friendship. My gratitude to Natalie Gillard, the creator of *Just the Facts* for being a part of this study.

To the many educators whose advocacy for students inspires me to do my best for our students. A special thanks to colleagues who inspired and encouraged me along the way, Michael McLellan, Marcy Leonard, Dr. Kevin Gilbert. John Krownapple, Shannon Keeny, Jen Hlvaka, Charlene Allen, Derek Anderson, Sonia Hurd, Lisa Smith, Megan Chrobak, Tanisha Burks, Shari Lorch, Kim Scaife, Dr. Joy Smith, Connie Stahler, Stasha Swartz, Kristin Terry, Alexia Couch, Dr. Aaron Dale, Judy Hendricks, Jen Blasko, Tracey Albright, and Debra O'Byrne. Thank you to Scott Ruehl, Dr. Mary Levinsohn-Klyap, Dr. Eva Yiu, and Dr. Helen Nixon for supporting this work in the district.

To my closest friends who cheered me on during this four-year process and became a solid source of love and nurturing, Tina Yu, Saman Akhtar, Jasleen Modi, Min Woo, Asma Sheikh, Deepa Iyer, and Sonia Kotecha.

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EXAMINING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' CULTURALLY PROFICIENT PRACTICES: FROM SELF AWARENESS TO COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Chapter One

School administrators, in the U.S., are leading schools that are more racially, linguistically, and ethnically diverse than at any other time in the history of this country (Hussar & Bailey 2014; Taie & Goldring, 2017). They are leading staff whose primary responsibility is to educate every child so they graduate ready for college or entry into the workforce. Less than half of students enrolled in public education identified as White since 2014, and this student demographic is estimated to decrease through fall 2028 (NCES, 2019). As racial categories are examined in this study, Latinx is used in the intervention study to include a term that is gender inclusive of male, female, transgender, and people not identifying outside the gender binary (Salinas & Lozano, 2017). The NCES (2019) data set, projected an increase of Latinx, Asian, and students who reported that they are two or more races through 2028 with the Black student population remaining stable at the current percentage. In contrast to these student data, 82.6% of teachers identified as White and 76% of the teachers across the nation are female (Taie & Goldring, 2017).

As school administrators, defined in this study as principals and assistant principals, are customarily former teachers, their demographics reflect the following: White, 78%, Black, 11%, Latinx, 9%, and the additional racial categories combined into the remaining 3% (Taie & Goldring, 2019). The changing student demographics is a statistical fact; it is neither a problem nor an issue. Educational outcomes for students are at the heart of PreK-12 schooling. The consistent pattern of disparities in outcomes between racialized student groups is the issue. In

the past, the problem has been focusing on perceived deficits in the students rather than a more current perspective of exploring educator and institutional practices that affect outcomes for students.

The academic and disciplinary outcomes for the different racial groups show disparities. Current examination of academic achievement and graduation rates, in school show lower outcomes for Black and Latinx students than with their White and Asian peers (Noguera, 2012). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2019) with data from U.S. Department of Education (2016), graduation rates are higher for students identifying as Asian, 91% and White, 89%, than for Latinx, 80%, Black, 78% and American Indian/Alaskan Native, 72%. Additionally, a deeper exploration into the disciplinary referrals and suspension of Black and Latinx students indicates they are disciplined for subjective reasons such as disrespect, non-compliance, or excessive noise Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). In contrast, White students are more likely to receive disciplinary referrals for objective or observable offenses, such as smoking, vandalism, or obscene language (Gregory, et al., 2010). The demographics make the case for a potential "cultural mismatch" (Gregory, et al., 2010 p. 63) between the educators, leaders and their students. There is also the potential for implicit bias and these negative expectations may continue to impact the differences in academic and discipline outcomes between Black and Latinx students. However, the demographics and cultural mismatches are just two dynamics in this complex issue school administrators are working within.

Public schools were not originally intended to benefit all students. Formal education was originally meant for wealthy White male children (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The inclusion of other students, as time progressed, was to assimilate non-English European students into the values and beliefs of an emerging American identity (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Children, who

were indigenous to this land, were forced into boarding schools in an attempt to assimilate and cut ties from cultural heritage. Additionally, enslaved children were forbidden from learning how to read or write, in order to continue generational enslavement of a free labor source (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Tyack and Cuban, 1995). The afore mentioned violations of dignity against children in this country, are evidence of the harmful and inequitable beginnings of education in this country. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling of Brown v. Board of Education (1954), created the legal footing for desegregated schools, however, the law alone did not prepare a nation to change the societal norms or biases in place for hundreds of years. Ladson-Billings (2006) argues the disparities for Black and Latinx students are not an achievement gap, but rather the outcomes of the "educational debt" (p.7) resulting from the country's historical, economic, and sociopolitical debts creating conditions of inequities for students and communities of the students. This notion brings forth an important question, "What is the role of school administrators when the schools are recreating conditions that produce inequities and is their charge to uphold or to challenge the status quo?"

An understanding and awareness of the systemic and institutional barriers affecting schools are important to helping educators understand the larger context of the issues facing students of color. A deeper dive into how the systemic and institutional barriers affect an educator's implicit bias and ability to fairly teach all students are crucial to building inclusive and equitable schools. The opportunity to redress deep seated inequities intentionally designed into the original creation of public schools is important to the future for all our students. These inequities were built on the elitist beliefs of White men with means and power about which students were worthy of an education (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). An opportunity to self- examine one's beliefs about equity, cultural competence, and

social justice will offer educators a means to examine their practices with their students. School administrators, comprised of school principals and assistant principals, have the positional power in schools to change practices. One way to influence changes is to lead by example and model actions that will promote cultural competence. It is not enough to model cultural competence, additionally, leaders can advocate for all students to be treated fairly. In order to lead guided by one's ethics and morals, a leader is motivated by an internalized moral perspective (Dinh, et al., 2014)

Culturally proficient leadership begins with leaders surfacing their own biases, assumptions, values, and beliefs (Terrell &Lindsey, 2009). The leadership actions do not end with critical self-reflection, but also include critically examining current policies and practices in order to become change agents. When administrators disrupt the structural inequities inherent in public schools, which have historically benefitted White middle-class students, they provide more equitable opportunities for all students (Calarco, 2014; Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2005). This study proposes an opportunity to support school leaders to increase the use of culturally proficient practices that serve the best interests of all students. The focus on educators' culturally responsive practices may support a student's sense of belonging and increase teachers' collective efficacy in educating students in a culturally competent manner (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

Problem of Practice

A current problem of practice is the variability in the leadership preparation and experiences of school administrators contributing to the disparities in educational outcomes between student groups. The data consistently shows differences between the academic success and graduation rates of Black and Latinx students, on average, when compared to White and

Asian students (NCES, 2019). However, among the myriad of factors that influence student outcomes, the data is only the end result of historical inequities that have purposely advantaged different groups. It is incumbent on educators to teach in a culturally competent manner that values all students, increases equity by decreasing barriers and increasing opportunities and access for all students. The complexity of addressing one's own biases, acknowledging and challenging barriers and advantages systemically in place is difficult for teachers to do this well without support from their school leaders. In order to help educators better serve all their students, it is essential for school administrators to lead their staff by modeling culturally proficient leadership.

The purpose of this research is twofold. First, the research investigates the coursework current school administrators took on the topics of equity, cultural competence, and social justice during their preservice university coursework in preparation to become school administrators. Second, this research identifies ways to support school-based administration to effectively lead diverse school communities by increasing culturally proficient practices. This study fills a gap in the literature to blend the Bronfenbrenner (1994) Ecological Theory (EST) with the Cultural Proficiency Framework (Cross et al., 1989), cultural competence, equity, and social justice. The factors of cultural competence, equity and social justice are the three themes linking leadership for culturally proficient practices.

Theoretical Framework

Socio-Ecological Model and Leadership

Bronfenbrenner (1994) introduced the ecological system theory (EST) in human development to examine children in context with their environment within a nested framework of systems which are identified as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and

chronosystem. Each layer of the system presents influences and interactions within society that affect human development. The microsystem is the immediate environment of the person that includes who they interact with face-to-face, day to day, and how this influences them as a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The mesosystem is comprised of the relationships between the different factors in the immediate environment, (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The exosystem is the linking of events or other factors that do not involve the person, but indirectly influence the person's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The macrosystem is the overarching laws, beliefs, values, customs, and "blueprint" for the culture in which the person is developing (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 1646). Lastly, the chronosystem examines the dimension of time across development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Two propositions remain consistent within EST: (a) human development takes place over time and involves increasing complex interactions between the person and the immediate environment and (b) outcome of person's development varies dependent on different variables and in the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The EST model was adapted by Wielkiewicz and Stelzner (2005) to examine leadership theory. They critique leadership studies which view organizations in an industrial paradigm and narrowly align the organization's success and failures solely on the leader. The authors argue organizations are more akin to ecological systems than cogs working in a machine. The analogy is expanded, explaining that organizations are complex and the leader and organization are both influenced and influence the other, thus more akin to an ecological system. Evans, Thorton, and Usinger (2012) propose school improvement is reliant on four change theories: (a) continuous improvement, (b) organizational learning, (c) learning organizations, and (d) appreciative inquiry. The four of the theories speak to the complexity of educational organizations and how each of those theories can support educational transformation. For this study, an examination of

how the school administrator influences the organization is relevant. Systems thinking, or the concept of interdependency of the individual and organization is foundational to co-creating the learning organization through iterative learning. A leader who is grounded in their values can better communicate their beliefs and build a shared vision with their staff (Evans et al., 2012). The theory of continuous improvement frames how school improvement has to consider the complexity of school and how the school leader influences the school as an organization.

Ecological Systems Theory - Examination of Factors for School Administrators

The EST theoretical model provides a framework to examine the complexity of school leadership through both the leaders' individual development and their interactions with the immediate environment. To frame the factors affecting school leaders in the EST, Figure 1 displays the leader in the center of the ecosystem and the factors within each ecosystem. Next, Table 1 shows the organization of the layers of the EST and factors that affect school administrators. Each of the factor in the ecological system, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem are reviewed in connection to how they influence school leadership practices.

Figure 1. The EST of a School Administrator

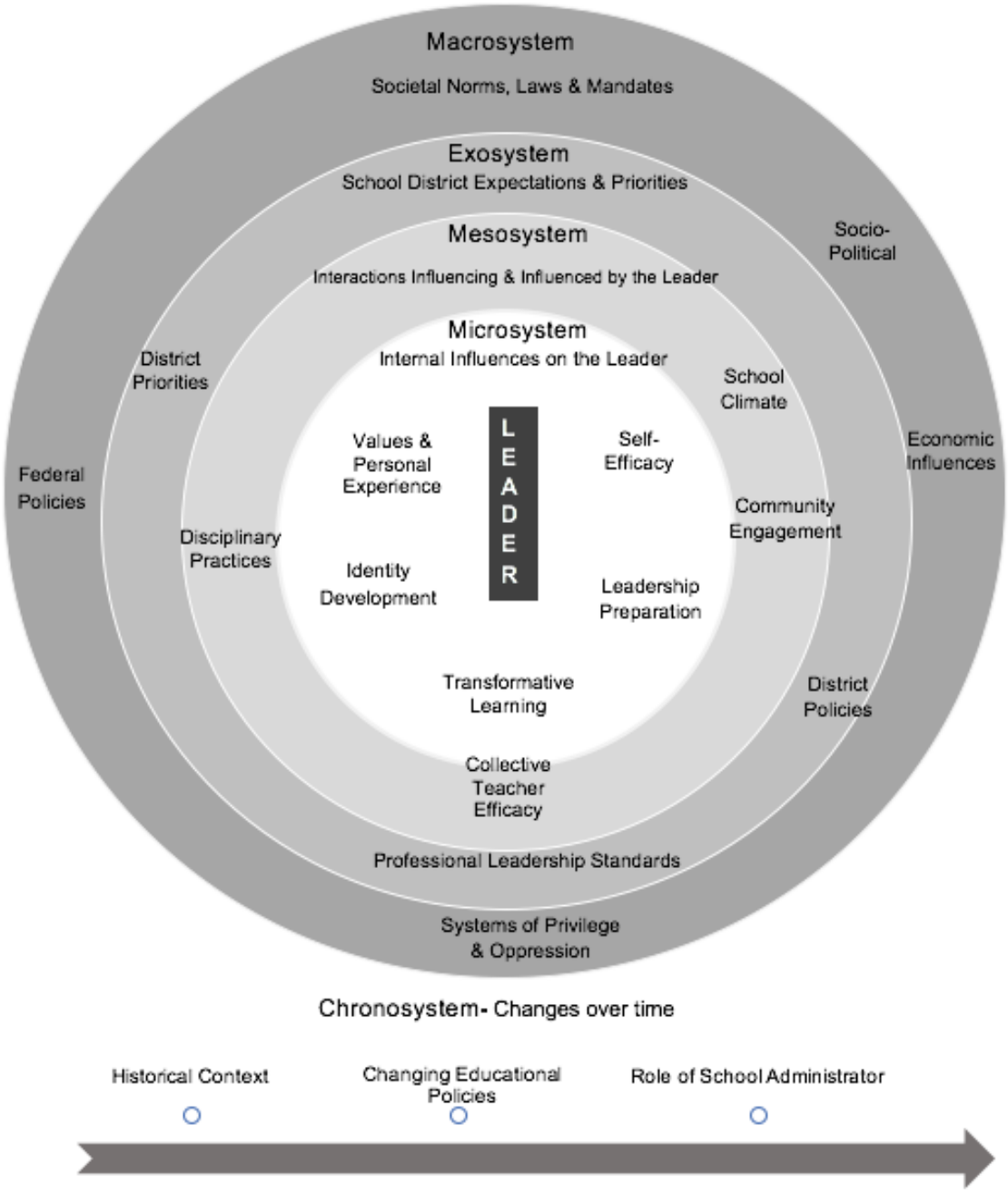


Figure X.

Table 1

Ecological Model with Factors for School Administrators

EST	Factors
Microsystem	Values and Life Experience Racial Identity Development Transformative Learning Self-Efficacy Leadership Preparation
Mesosystem	School Climate Collective Teacher Efficacy Disciplinary Practices Community Engagement
Exosystem	District Policies/Priorities Professional Standards
Macrosystem	Federal Policies Economic Influences Socio-Political Context
Chronosystem	Historical Context Changes in Educational Policies Role of School Administrators

Note. The EST is based Ecological Models of Human Development by Bronfenbrenner, (1979), *The Ecological Model of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA

Microsystem. The microsystem, introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1994), is the immediate environment of the person. Table 1 details the microsystem of school administrators with variables that could influence their leadership in diverse school populations. A leader's values, personal, and professional experiences shape their leadership, thus culturally proficient leadership begins with an inside out approach to examining one experiences with cross-cultural interactions (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Experiences that increase critical self-reflection and one's ability to cultivate an increased awareness of their values, beliefs, and assumptions, are

important for school leader's development (Collay, M., 2014; Evans, 2007; Guerra, Nelson, Jacobs, & Yamamura, 2013; Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, & Terrell, 2009; Salvaggio, 2003). The ways in which school administrators self-reflect can support their leadership in diverse school communities in the context of the microsystem. The leader's conscious efforts to self-reflect, helps to surface unconscious biases (Hernandez & Kose, 2012; Santamaria, 2014) and address deficit thinking (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006); McKenzie & Scheurich 2004).

Racial Identity Development. School administrators' racial identity is a factor in their leadership, regardless of whether they have explored this aspect of their cultural identity. We are humans living in socially constructed racial categories. Racial identity is the group that is thought to have the similar racial heritage (Singh, 2019). Racial identity development are the processes that one goes through as they learn about their racial identity (Singh, 2019). With the changing demographics in the schools, based on race, ethnicity, and cultural differences, it is relevant for school administrators to reflect on their own racial identity development (Khalifa, Gooden, &Davis, 2016; Murakami, Hernandez, Mendez-Morse & Byrne-Jimenez, 2015). Delpit (2006) states that it is important for school leaders to begin their leadership journey by turning inward to fully examine how their cultural and racial lens affects their leadership with students who's racial identities are differently than the school leader. Exploring racial identity theories can be helpful to school administrators. Because a higher percentage of school administrators identify as White, a racial identity model developed by Helms (1984) can be useful. Helms (1984) contrasted stages of racial identity development of White people to stages of Black identity development. This model contends that many people who identify as White often start in a colorblind state in which race does not have significance in their day to day lives. The unawareness on the part of the White educators can be a barrier to understanding the experiences

of students and staff of color. Because non-White racialized groups are often devalued by the dominant culture, students and staff of color are much more aware of their racial identity and thus a colorblind approach may feel like the individual is invalidating their identity and experiences (Banks, 2012; Murakami et al., 2016; Lindsey et al., 2005; Sue & Sue, 2012). In later models for racial identity Helms include cognitive dissonance and eventually integrative awareness, and suggests this model isn't only for encounters White people have with Black people, but additional races, such as Indigenous people, Asian, and Latinx, and termed this "People of Color-White Interactions" (Thompson & Carter, 2013, p.18). This study proposes in order for school administrators to fully understand how their racial identity influences their leadership, they have to understand and explore their own racial identity development.

Transformative Learning. Adult learners are different from young learners. The life experiences of adults are not left behind when they engage with new knowledge. Mezirow (1991), furthering adult learning theory, contends transformative learning can free a person from bias because it changes the way one sees themselves and how they see their world. This change can be a result of a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow 2000), or a learning cycle in which the views of one's reality are challenged. Brown (2005) states critical reflection is at the heart of transformative learning and can be the foundation for social justice leadership preparation. When the leadership preparation is coupled with transformative learning experiences, the preservice leaders are able to see distortions in their own beliefs, feelings and attitudes which may help with mitigating hegemonic thinking and mitigate bias (Brown, 2005).

*Self-efficacy***.** Bandura (1977) in describing socio-cognitive theory of learning, described self-efficacy as the belief a learner has about their ability to implement a new skill or task. The four components of self-efficacy are: (a) verbal persuasion, (b) mastery experience, (c) vicarious

experience, and (d) self-awareness of one-emotional responses (Bandura, 1977). With the expectations for school leaders ranging from supporting staff, partnering with parents and community, developing positive relationships with students, implementing district goals for student achievement, and managing the day-to-day operations of a school (Bouchamma, Basque & Marcotte, 2014) an exploration into school administrator self-efficacy may offer insight into a leaders' perception of whether they believe they are able to support student groups currently not meeting the same educational outcomes as their peers. Leadership preparation programs that develop opportunities to increase self-efficacy for school administrators is the next factor explored.

Leadership preparation. Principals are important to student's academic outcomes, their preparation to go into administration is foundational in the microsystem. Research has explored how leadership preparation programs help to educate leaders on the importance of diversity (Brown, 2006; Vogel, 2011) however Khalifia, Gooden and Davis's (2016) investigations indicate the leadership preparation in their research revealed a lack of meaningful conversations about diversity. Further concerns with inadequate leadership preparation range from a mismatch between program curricula and actual job skills with White principals reporting lower preparedness to support Black, Latinx and students from low-income backgrounds than their nonwhite peers (Johnston & Young, 2019).

The factors identified in the microsystem: identity development, transformative learning, self-efficacy, and leadership preparation, influence school administrators both in their leadership and in their motivation to lead diverse school communities. The variables in the microsystem directly impact the leader as they develop to build the skills to lead their schools. Next, the

mesosystem, or the various factors that are both influencing and influenced by the leader's microsystem are examined.

Mesosystem. The mesosystem explores the interactions, linkages, and influences of the various microsystems on the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). The factors that are influencing and influenced by the leader are: (a) school climate, (b) teachers' collective efficacy, (c) disciplinary practices, and (d) community engagement. The factors are examined through a deeper exploration of how a school leader responds to differences in the mesosystem and builds a vision for diverse school communities.

School climate. School climate is important to the school experiences of both students and educators. The school administrators play a pivotal role in influencing school climate through their leadership, relationships, and vision (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). A school climate that builds trust and transparency is a strong predictor of student achievement even when race and gender have been accounted for in different studies (Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2009). A study conducted by Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) with 1,445 teachers in 199 schools found school leadership had a significant effect on the affective state of teachers, which can influence student achievement more than a direct impact on student learning outcomes. Another study set in an urban school district with racial minority and low-income families surveyed 513 parents/guardians of kindergarten to second grade students and found parent perceptions of school climate is related to student adjustment in the school and stronger social skills (Esposito, 1999). While the direct effects of school climate on student achievement is not identified in the study, the principal's leadership in building trust, with students, educators, and families, increased the parents' perceptions of a positive school climate and the study did draw a relationship with increased social skills and academic outcomes for early elementary students.

Teachers' Collective Efficacy. The collective confidence built when teachers believe they have the skills to implement changes in practice to support all students results in collective efficacy (Bandura, 1977). In schools with higher collective efficacy, the teachers take responsibility for their students' learning and do not allow family background, economic circumstances, or low expectations to impede their fortitude in working with the students (Leithwood, et al., 2010). The school administrators have the ability to effect change by supporting structural changes for meaningful professional learning to develop collective efficacy with initiatives to support diverse student populations (Leithwood, et al., 2010). By supporting the teachers to increase their collective efficacy, the school administrators are affecting the interactions of teacher and students in the mesosystem.

Disciplinary Practices. Current disciplinary practices disproportionately penalize African American and Latino males (Skrla et al. 2004). In the mid-Atlantic state in which this study is focusing the research, the number of expulsions and suspensions for Black students has been above 23,000 from 2015-2018, and for Latinx students the numbers rose from 3,494 to 4,594 from 2015-2018 (Salmon, 2019). The Black students are 64% of the suspensions and expulsions in this district, yet they only make up 33% of the student population. The Latinx students are 17.4% of the population and make up 11.8% of the suspensions and expulsions. Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, and Pollack (2017) argue the deep historical legacy of enslavement, Jim Crow laws, polices against Latinx and other non-European immigrants has culminated in discomfort and silence around discussions about race and the impact of racism. The silence contributes to the unconscious bias and stereotyping of Black and Latinx students.

The current demographic mismatch with a predominantly White educator and school administrator with majority minority students negatively impacts disciplinary outcomes for

Black and Brown students and at the same time benefits White students (Carter et al., 2017). This dynamic is evidenced by neuroscience findings indicating increased empathy for people who are racially the same (Azevedo et al., 2013) and less favorable associations by White people with Black people resulting in implicit bias (Greenwald et al., 1998). It is incumbent of school leadership to increase their own awareness of implicit bias and how it affects disciplinary practices in their schools.

Community Engagement. The ability of the school leader to build engagement with the families of students from diverse backgrounds or families marginalized either because of race, language, socioeconomics or other factors, is seen as valuable to both the community and students (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Khalifia, 2012). The positive outcomes from the engagement with the families and students include increased trust and rapport between the school and community, and increased student academic gains (Khalifia, 2012). Bridging the relationship between the community and students also recognizes the expertise of the parents and community and increases a co-construction of funds of knowledge, or a deeper extension of academic knowledge (Rodriguez, 2013). Teachers can use the information to scaffold instruction and support the student's learning (Ross & Berger, 2009) and increase their sense of belonging in the classroom (Allen, Kern, Vella-Broderick, Hattie, & Waters, 2018)

In the mesosystem, effective school administrators are actively influencing the variables from the microsystems, while simultaneous being self-aware of how the microsystems affects their leadership. The school administrators' leadership approach affects school climate and teachers' collective efficacy (Leithwood et al., 2010; Brezicha et al., 2015) and can be a strong predictor of student achievement across gender and race (Goddard, et al., 2009). Unconscious bias is connected to unfair disciplinary outcomes for Black and Latinx students (Carter et al.,

2017; Skrla et al., 2004) and while unconscious bias is an internalized process, a leader who can openly discuss unconscious bias and normalize the process of surfacing one's bias will help teachers increase their willingness and ability to recognize bias in discipline practices. Lastly, a school administrator who purposely increased community engagement yields benefits for the students and school community (Khalifia, 2012). In the next layer of the nested system, Bronfenbrenner describes the variables outside of the leadership's direct sphere, but yet those that impact the school administrator.

Exosystem. The exosystem expands the leaders' interactions and influence into the community outside of the school and immediate school community. Policies from the school district guide the focus of school improvement plans which affect the focus of outcomes for students. Professional standards currently set by national organizations have increased the expectations for school leaders to address cultural responsiveness and equity.

District policies and practices. The expectations, and policies from the school district affect the school leaders' motivation. School districts that have a strategic plan and explicit goals to support cultural competence, equity, and social justice, hold school leaders accountable in working toward those goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Policies no longer have minimal expectations for students deemed by teachers as unable to achieve, but rather aim to change professional practice to ensure high achievement for all students (Honig, 2006). Lindle (1999) argues the role of the principal is to persuade and negotiate the micropolitics, or the network of teachers, parents, central office, school board, and students towards successful educational outcomes. This role is distinctly a shift from previous expectations for principals to maintain order, and compliance with the micropolitics (Willower, 1991). This type of leading from top down is more aligned with earlier leadership approaches of authoritarian leadership, which is

based imposing power rather than influencing change (Van Seters & Field, 1990). Willower (1991) argues school administrators are viewed as protectors of the organization, and want to protect the autonomy of the teachers and the school. It is important for school administrators to balance the implementation of district policies with the autonomy of the teachers. The question that should guide a school administrator leading diverse students is whether the district policy and teacher autonomy support the needs of all students.

Professional Standards. The inability to close the gaps in opportunities for Black, Latinx and indigenous students led some researchers to examine leadership preparation courses, finding inconsistent and minimal offerings for aspiring school administrators on the critical topics of social justice and multicultural leadership (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006). While higher education did make an attempt to align their leadership preparation courses with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) standards which introduced language on equity and cultural responsiveness, they stopped short of requiring participants in the leadership preparation program to take a three-credit course addressing diversity and equity (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006). With research supporting the need for leaders to understand and become culturally responsive (Khalifa, et al., 2016) the national evaluation standards for school leaders, were revised and the 2008 ISSLC became the new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015, added *Equity and Cultural Responsiveness* to the list of ten standards critical for school leaders to "move the needle on student learning and achieve more equitable outcomes" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, p. 1). This new standard increased the expectations for leaders to create equitable outcomes in schools (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015).

Macrosystem. The macrosystem encompasses the economic, political, and societal influences which impact the legal mandates at both the federal and state levels and uphold the

embedded systems of privilege and oppression within each society. These components are identified in Table 1. Often, both legal mandates and societal norms are in place to maintain the status quo and sustain the benefits of privileges granted to a select group of people over other groups of people. The scope of this study will investigate the leader's understanding of the larger macrosystem and their belief in the importance of understanding and influencing changes in the macrosystem which affect the students and staff they lead.

Federal Policies. During the last sixty years, the federal government has brought changes in policy affecting minoritized students in public education. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 all were developed to prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, cognitive or physical ability, and give the Department of Education a focus on civil rights enforcement (www2.ed.gov). These acts, thus put into place legislation to provide the right for all students to have access to an education. The Reagan administration, entered the White House wanting to eliminate the Department of Education, but after the publishing of *A Nation at Risk* (1984) pushed for accountability (Furgol & Helms, 2012; Mehta, 2013) the Reagan administration began a school reform movement that shifted the paradigm to increase federal and state control over local districts. Charter school, public school choice, vouchers, and new accountability were in the forefront of new administrations for the next 25 years (Mehta, 2013). The Bush Administration worked with state governors to establish performance goals and opened door for federal intervention with the states, while the Clinton Administration upheld conservative initiatives with the exception of increasing funding for Pre-K and head start which benefits minoritized and low-income students (Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2015). Under G.W. Bush's Administration No Child Left Behind was a significant policy that required the disaggregation of

data to examine the difference in outcomes between student groups, thus shifting the focus of accountability from the input in education, to the output in student outcomes and thereby taking greater federal control than previous administrations (Furgol & Helms, 2012). The Obama administration attached the Common Core standards to the Race to the Top stimulus package with 100 billion in emergency aid for public schools and colleges with four priorities that included standardized assessments for students, examining data systems to measure student growth, improving teacher effectiveness, and focusing on the lowest performing schools and supporting them to become top achieving schools (Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2015). The Trump Administration appointed a Secretary who is highly supportive of charter schools, which the NAACP opposed. They stated that charter schools, which do not abide by the same mandate as public schools, create de facto segregation and divert funds from public schools which are mandated to educate all students (Horsford, 2018; Richardson, 2017).

*Economic influences***.** Economic concerns brought about by the 1983 Department of Education report A *Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* created alarmist responses at both the state and federal levels (Mehta, 2014). The tone of the report painted a bleak picture for the U.S. economy with U.S. students' poor performance as compared to the educational test performance outcomes of students around the world a major concern. The report critiqued the educational system, and in doing so, some people began to critique and blame students who were not performing as well as others. The patterns of inequitable performance outcomes were along racial, gender, and class lines, with African American and Latinx boys from lower socio-economic levels scoring lower than White and Asian peers (Rodriquez, 2004). While some educators and policy-makers recognized the inequitable and unfair institutional practices stemming from systemic racism and classism as factors in creating this situation others

did not (Rodriguez, 2004). Other people chose a deficit thinking approach to view the concern, which in essence blamed the students themselves, or the circumstances of their families for not meeting academic gains (Valencia, 2010). Payne's (2001) description of the 'culture of poverty' has been heavily critiqued as being steeped in a deficit thinking model (Gorski, 2006; Valencia, 2010). School finance and equity were affected by both the *A Nation at Risk* report with school reformers calling for 'excellence' rather than the previous reformers call for equity (Berne, 1988). The unfortunate outcome of reformers focusing on excellence instead of equity, contributed the misperception the students who were not meeting achievement outcomes were a problem and holding other students back from excelling (Berne, 1988). The movement for "Excellence with Equity" (Ferguson, 2014, p.105), calls for a comprehensive approach to achieving equity for all students so Black and Brown students will have higher capabilities for academic skills based careers versus lower-paying jobs which maintain underpinnings of systemic privilege and oppression (Ferguson, 2014). The urgency to prepare all students for 21st century jobs increased the importance of economic considerations for all students (Ferguson, 2014).

Vertical equity, defined as a means to give students having different educational needs access to funding to meet with success (Berne & Stiefel, 1984) is an additional consideration with economic influences. School finance formulas sometimes placed school administrators in the position of answering to teachers, students and communities who were divided about the results from school finance formulas. The heated debates about adequate resources and funding also play out in the political context and federal policies as school choice, charter schools, and federal and state funding become politicized issues (Honig, 2006).

*Socio-political context***.** The last factor in the macrosystem is the societal and political context. An educational leader in the U.S. is a part of a democratic society, and as such in both influenced and an influencer in the democratic system (Weiner, 2003). Shields (2010) argues an essential part of an educational leader's role is to enhance the social, political, and cultural capital to provide equitable opportunities for all students. Harkavy (2006) draws upon Dewey's proposition, that the purpose of education so for students to become participator members of a democracy toward a "Good Society," (p. 7). Brooks and Watson (2019) argue it is crucial for school leaders to examine racism from the socio-political context and how this may affect their leadership. This argument is increasingly relevant as school administrators lead school who are increasingly of Black and Latinx populations. Policies under the current presidential administration affecting Muslim, immigrants, and specifically targeting students and families who may have different documentation statuses, have an impact in schools and as such school administrators have a greater need to be aware of the policies, and if needed take an activist stance to ensure the safety of all their students (Horsford, 2018).

Chronosystem. The systems of a school administrator have changed over time as has the varying levels of inclusiveness and diversity of student populations. Schools have evolved from institutions designed only for the elite: White, male students, (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) to free public schools, required by law to serve every student regardless of race, ethnicity, cognitive or physical ability, English language ability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the Supreme Court ruling that deemed the segregation of schools illegal, attempted to correct the legacy of racist laws. However, new laws alone cannot change deeper societal beliefs. Recent students have shown de facto segregation, or overrepresentation of African American and Latinx students into lower level classes as early as elementary school

create modern day segregation patterns within schools (Reardon, 2016). While laws have changed over the past two hundred years, the historical remnants of racism, White superiority, and xenophobia continue to contribute to current inequities with resources, opportunities, and access in today's schools (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

In summary, this ecological model proposes that leaders begin their reflective practice with an inside out approach (Cross, et al., 1989) of self-assessment at the microsystem level, which continues into how they manage the factors in the mesosystem. In valuing diversity as a core value, the leader values the rich diversity of students, staff and community and views the diversity as strengths and not deficits (Valencia, 2010). Culturally proficient leaders manage differences for equity and adapt personal and school practices for inclusive schools and classrooms (Terrell and Lindsey, 2009). In moving into the exosystem the culturally proficient leader exemplifies professional standards for equity and in turn expects staff to institute practices for equity, cultural competence, and social justice. In enacting change to challenge the status quo, the school leaders exemplify transformative leadership practices (Shields, 2010). At the mesosystem level, school administrators may have to take an activist role and become transformative leaders challenging harmful policies to protect all students (Horsford, 2018). In all levels of the ecosystem the leaders maintain the values and focus on equity, cultural competence, and social justice. The chronosystem examines the context of time for both the leader, and the context of education.

A school administrator is better prepared to leader diverse school communities if they build on three components: (a) cultural competence, (b) equity, and (c) social justice. Cultural competence is grounded in one's own identity and how this influences their leadership and cross-cultural interactions. Equity is grounded in the concept of fairness and how examines practices

both internally and with groups they are leading to change practice and polices for change. Social justice is the larger understanding of systems of privilege and oppression both in the educational context an in the larger socio-political context and how school administrators may have to take an activist stance when advocating for the inclusion and safety of all students. The conceptual framework below outlines how preparation in the areas of cultural competence, equity, and social justice leads to increased beliefs and motivation to change practices for inclusive schools that better serve all students. In the next section, a literature review examines the factors of equity, cultural competence, and social justice for school leaders.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework.

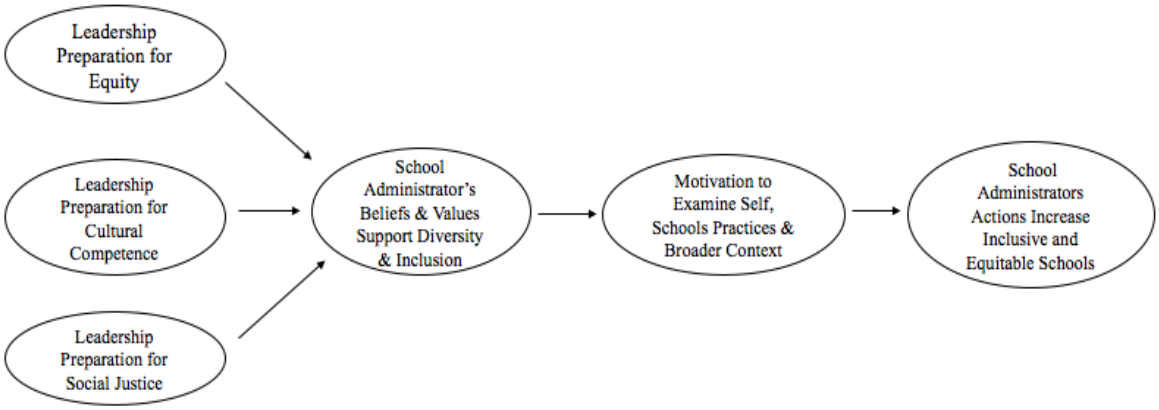


Figure X. The three areas of knowledge in leadership preparation, equity, cultural competence and social justice influence the school administrator to have beliefs and values to support diversity and inclusion. That foundation for diversity supports the motivation for school administrators to examine their own practices, barriers in the schools they lead, and current policies in the larger socio-political context. The motivation will result in practices that support inclusive and equitable schools

Literature Synthesis

Factors Affecting Leading in Diverse Communities

In conducting the literature review, gaps and patterns emerged with inconsistencies in current research about leadership preparation and the definitions of cultural competence, equity, and social justice. The literature documented numerous studies preparing teachers with multicultural education and cultural responsiveness, but less literature on preparing school leaders to lead their staff in those areas. More literature was found on educational leadership theory and frameworks in meeting the needs of historically and currently marginalized students than empirical research on educational leadership in diverse communities. The initial search in the educational databases, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, and JSTOR using the search words: cultural proficiency, culturally proficient leadership, educators and cultural proficiency, and culturally proficient schools, revealed a paucity of empirical literature focused on cultural proficiency. Those search items were selected because the district in which this study takes place has selected this approach to supporting school teams and teachers with effective cross-cultural interactions. Authors contributing to the literature in cultural proficiency influenced by research from multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, equity, cultural competence, social justice and organizational change. Lastly, the studies often overlapped their definitions of equity and social justice within the context of leadership. This study continues to build on previous research with the factors, equity, cultural competence and social justice identified in the literature as relevant for leading diverse communities.

Equity

Equity in education is defined as focusing on fairness of access to opportunities within sometimes unfair educational environments and societal structures, and leadership actions to

ensure each child or young adult has what they need it to be successful "regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic background, English proficiency, immigration status, socioeconomic status, disability." (CPE, 2016 p. 2). While school finances, resource allocation, and state to state differences are important equity issues, they all focus on leadership at a higher level than school-based administrators, as such, school finances will not be the direct focus of this literature review (BenDavid-Hadar & Paulino,2009; Rodriguez, 2004). The studies reviewed focus on leadership preparation and leadership practices for equity.

Equity in Leadership Preparation Programs. The topic of equity, if taught in leadership preparation programs, varies in definitions and depth of study. Hess and Kelly (2007) surveyed 56 principal preparation programs for various themes and found equity was commonly discussed under the topic "norms and values" (p. 10). Equity was included in class sessions on "stratification, multiculturalism, diversity, constructivism, inequality, social justice and gender," (p. 10) which indicates the definition of equity in those classes were embedded into concepts and may lead to confusion about the definition of equity and a school leader's role in leading for equity. Language is a key building block to understanding complex issues (Resnick, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978) thus it is important to clarify the definition of equity for school leaders in practical terms. In the same Hess and Kelly (2007) study, the researchers noted only 10% of the time in principal-preparation programs focused on the norms and values, however within that time, social inequity, school reform, or uplifting silenced voices, such as "females, gay, impaired, over/underweight, bullied, biracial, religion etc." (p. 18) were discussed. While the Hess and Kelly study (2007) was comprehensive, it did not capture data citing the experiences of the preservice leaders from the courses, thus lacking a comprehensive understanding of how the

preservice leaders in the course perceived the topics of equity. The next study reviewed does offer insight into leadership preparation in equity from the preservice leader's perspective.

A qualitative study conducted by Vogel (2011) questioned 25 educators within five years of completing a leadership preparation program. One question posed to randomly selected respondents was to define equity. The researcher noted the respondents' definitions for equity were often similar to the researcher's definition of social justice. For example, equity was described as "fair and equitable treatment of all," (Vogel, 2011, p. 74), which is a partial definition, but the respondents did not acknowledge or share knowledge of unfair structures or practices in education as being part of the definition. Vogel (2011) argues, the inability to fully define equity indicates a lack of deeper understanding about equity in leadership preparation programs. The Vogel (2011) study's participants all graduated from one university in Colorado, so the results are not generalizable to all leadership preparation classes. However, both the Vogel (2011) and the Hess and Kelly study (2007), substantiate a need to better define and build a comprehensive understanding about equity for educational leaders.

The need for deeper understanding was validated in a study by Miller and Martin, (2015) involving qualitative data from four racially demographically changing districts. The school districts were either identified as urban schools by the state of Missouri or were districts with an increased population of African American, Hispanic, and Asian students but a decreased population of White students (Miller & Martin, 2015). The participants were four principals, one White male in his late fifties, one White female, in her mid-fifties, and two African American females, in their forties and fifties, having between five to thirteen years of experience as a principal. In the interviews, the participants recalled coursework on equity, but did not perceive that the coursework offered a deep "contextual or experiential understanding of diversity and

equity" (Miller & Martin, 2015, p. 137). With previous studies indicating limited understanding of equity by participants in leadership preparation program, defining and gaining a comprehensive understanding of equity to support current school leaders is relevant to this research.

Leadership Practices for Equity. This section reviews studies which assess principal practices for equity and frame a deeper understanding of the concept of equity when leading schools with diverse populations. Cooper (2009) conducted a comparative case study of the perceptions of principals and staff in two North Carolina elementary schools which experienced rapid changes in student demographics over a five-year period. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documents. The schools were selected for their changing student demographics, and the principals' self- proclaimed equity-oriented stance. Cooper (2009) selected schools with an ethnic minority majority in their student population. In addition to looking for schools with high racial and ethnic diversity, the study also found schools with a high number of students receiving free and reduced meals. The researcher then identified two leaders for participation in the study on transformative leaders. The purposeful sample and non-randomized process of identifying participants for the study may be a limitation because the findings are not generalizable; however, some qualitative researchers argue understanding a situation in depth has important value in and of itself (Schutt, 2015). In addition to the two leaders, Cooper (2009) conducted 36 interviews with staff, comprised of teachers, a parent coordinator, leadership team and principals, and 14 interviews with parents in an effort to increase the credibility of the findings (Krefting, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The racial and ethnic background of the interviewees were White, African American, and Latinx (Cooper, 2009). Both principals interviewed reported very little coursework or professional development

with an equity focus, however both stated that their equity-stance guided their actions toward inclusiveness. Examples the principals cited to support their goal of inclusiveness were, “hiring a Spanish-speaking parent coordinator, supported formations of a cultural committee, forged a community partnership with a local church that many Latinx families, and strengthening partnerships with diverse community groups,” (Cooper, 2009, p. 718). While those actions helped to address equity issues at the mesosystem layer with building community engagement, a critical piece in managing the differences within the school and between the teachers and students and families was not taking place (Cooper, 2009). The research surfaced that the leaders should also “demonstrate the courage to facilitate and engage in hard dialogue about race, culture, class, language and inequality with their staff and families, and then make decisions that exemplify their commitment to equity,” (Cooper, 2009, p.719). This study identified engaging in dialogue about race, culture, class, language and inequality as important for equity (Cooper, 2009). Of additional relevance, the two principals in this study reported having minimal classes or professional learning on equity, but were driven by their own values aligned with equity. While the two principals in this study reported, their own values grounded their motivation for equity, further investigation about a leaders’ motivation for equity can focus on whether leaderships preparation classes, and/or professional learning increases a deeper understanding of equity and subsequently increases school leaders’ motivation to increase leadership practices for equity.

Limitations of the Cooper (2009) study were the exclusion of Cambodian families. The Cambodian families are significant to the changing demographics in this study. The researcher did state some parents were not comfortable participating in the study, because of uncertainty to how the information would be used and immigration status was named as a concern by some

parents in responding to the study. This finding is important because it again raises the importance for researchers and school leaders to be aware of the sociopolitical context in the macrosystem. Another limitation in the Cooper (2009) study is the contribution of parent and teacher voices who were already in a position of privilege, White, English-language speakers, middle to upper middle-class, and in positions of power in the school or community. By including only, the voices of the White, English-speaking, middle-class parents in the study, the study inadvertently recreated an inequity into the study.

Transformative Leadership. Investigating transformative leadership provides insight into how educational leader can affect change inside the schools and at the broader societal level Shields (2010). Collecting data from the State Report Card (available to the public online from the state department of education) Shields (2010) then identified principals to participate in the study. This approach helped to identify the participants with a purposeful sample (Schutt, 2015). Shields (2010) then collected data from two principals espousing equity and backward mapped the data to identify beliefs, motivation, and leadership practices. The leadership practices identified are the following: (a) ensuring each student has a fair chance, (b) challenging deficit thinking, (c) extended learning opportunities with staff by creating the safe learning environment (d) open dialogues with staff to mitigate avoidance of shame and blame, (e) home visits by staff to increase community engagement, (f) holding regular meetings with staff and community partnerships and overcoming resistance to those efforts, (g) explicitly rejecting teachers blaming the parents for student outcomes, and (h) demonstrating moral courage and activism by supporting staff who are members of the LGBTQ+ community, and (i) challenging the superintendent on deficit language (Shields, 2010).

While the Shields (2010) study has a small sample size, the data collected provide the foundation to build distinctions to define transformative leadership that builds on earlier theorists and empirical studies for transformative leadership. Building on transformative learning theory, which Mezirow (2000), describes as the process of framing one's reference, self-reflecting, and then deconstructing and reconstructing one's knowledge are relevant to transformative leadership. Transformative leadership theorists credit Freire (2014) with many of the foundations guiding the principles, such as dialogic conversations and the call for teachers to view themselves as co-constructors of knowledge with students, rather than depositing information into students, which advocates for a change in the approach to education. Pursuing further on Freire's suppositions, additional researchers call for transformative leaders to not only examine current educational conditions, but to change them (Franz, 2002; Glanz, 2007). Shields (2010) advancing previous theorists, identified the following values held by transformative leaders, "liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice" (Shields, 2010, p. 563). A difference identified between transformational leaders and transformational leaders, is transformational leaders want organizational change for effectiveness, however, transformative leaders influence individual, organizational, and societal transformation (Shields, 2010, p. 563). School effectiveness and school reform compose the theoretical framework for transformational leadership, subsequently the leader to attends to the needs of the organization. In contrast, transformative leadership drew from critical race and gender theories, cultural reproduction, and social justice leadership, which centers on ensuring all students meet with success and the identities of all students are central in schools (Shields, 2010, p. 563). Differentiating between transformative and transformational leadership will support this research study, as both are examined in the context of culturally proficient leadership. Both the Shields and Cooper studies

narrowed the leadership focus in their studies to only two leaders resulting in an in-depth collection of data. A limitation in both studies are the small sample size of two participants which limits generalizability, but as stated earlier, generalizability may not be the goal of qualitative researchers (Schutt, 2015).

Equity Traps. Equity traps result when the brain reinforces "dysconscious" thinking, or thoughts that are so deeply ingrained they were often unexposed or examined by the individual (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004 p. 603). The term unconscious or implicit bias is more commonly used in literature today to refer to the same phenomena as dysconscious thinking (Greenwald, Nosek & Banaji 1998; Staats, 2016).

Furthering previous research, McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) conducted a qualitative study with eight experienced White teachers using in-depth interviews to explore the teachers' possibly unexamined thought patterns contributing to racist, stereotypical, and prejudicial thoughts that can perpetuate deficit thinking. The researchers found the deficit thoughts educators may hold about students often associated with race, living in poverty, behavior, cultural practices, and language abilities, and can result in lowered expectations from the teachers. This research also identified four equity traps teachers often maintained at an unconscious level: (a) deficit view, (b) "racial erasure," (p. 613) which can also be referred to colorblindness (c) "employment and avoidance of gaze," (p. 619) defined as continuously watching for misbehavior or avoiding groups of students based on race, and (d) "paralogic beliefs and behavior," (p. 624) which means a conclusion is drawn from logic that is false and self-deceptive (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). The following example of a paralogic belief was given in the study: "the anger of the kids has caused me [to act this way]; I've gotten sucked into their anger. I mean I've never spoken to kids the way I have spoken to them. I mean it's just."

(McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p. 624). In this case, the paralogic belief is that the children are responsible for the harmful response that the teacher displayed. The teacher "self-deceptively" exonerates themselves from taking responsibility for their harmful behavior and blames the child for their actions (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p. 624). Deficit views and racial erasure will be explored in greater depth as factors culturally proficient leadership may need to understand in order to lead for equity in their schools.

Deficit view. The first equity trap, deficit view, is one in which leaders need to be prepared to mitigate teachers' deficit thinking about students, families, and community by posing questions to challenge belief systems or assumptions (Lindsey et al., 2003). An empirical study with 24 schools examining the differences in gaps between achievement between the lowest performing and highest performing students in North Carolina identified the deficit thinking that can emerge with equity audits (Brown, Benkovitz, Muttillo, & Urban, 2011). An equity audit is a tool that can be used in districts and schools to carefully examine distribution of resources, gaps in opportunities, and disparities in disciplinary action to surface inequities in order to hold schools accountable to supporting the academic success of all students (English, 1998; Skrla, et al., 2004). The twenty-four schools identified for the study were selected from a pool of 61 schools that were state recognized as "Honor Schools of Excellence," meaning the schools appeared to have students performing at high levels on standardized tests (Brown, et al., 2011). The study was conducted in two phases: first, quantitative data were collected with equity audits and the second, qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews with principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders (n=80). The schools were identified either as schools with small gaps in achievement between the lowest and highest performing students or high gaps in achievement between the lowest and highest performing students. The equity audits

revealed similarities between both types of schools with funding, resources, qualifications of teachers, and range of diversity in student demographics (race, ethnicity, and socioeconomics). However, the difference between the schools was in the expectations of the students within the schools. In schools with a large gap between the higher and lower performing students, teachers had lower beliefs about the intellectual capabilities and then had lower expectations for lower performing students from lower SES and/or marginalized racial groups. In the schools with smaller gaps between the higher performing and lower performing students, the school leaders and teachers shared a unified belief that all students could and would succeed academically. They grounded their beliefs with academic optimism, high trust, positive teacher-student relationships, and high expectations from the principal for the performance of teachers and students. The significance of this study supports the importance of the values and beliefs expressed by leaders and shared by the teachers.

Racial erasure. The second equity trap, racial erasure, is similar to what might be termed colorblindness or cultural blindness (Cross, et al., 1989), and defined as the misconception, that if we ignore color or race, then racism will go away (hooks, 1992; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Avoiding discussions about the impact of racism on opportunity gaps with minoritized students and focusing instead on socioeconomic issues, may lead to blaming the circumstances of the students for their academic performance outcomes (Lindsey, et al. 2005). Acknowledging how racism marginalizes students offers school leaders a higher likelihood of effectively leading discussions about race, and negating racial erasure (DeMatthews, 2016; Theoharis, 2010). In essence, rather than avoiding discussions about the impact of race in education, the conversations may shift to how educators change systemic structures that are causing inequity for students of color and marginalized groups. Building on Skrla et al.'s 2001 research, McKenzie and

Scheurich (2004) propose that discussing how to mitigate racial erasure will help teachers discuss race and systemic racism in a manner that dismantles unfair practices in schools (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Not all educational leaders have been mandated to explore and understand the impact of racism in the educational system and thus have a gap in their leadership preparation which may affect their leadership in diverse school communities (Davis, Gooden, & Micheaux, 2015).

In summation, equity in education does involve a deeper examination of data surfaced by equity audits. The research suggests surfacing beliefs, values, assumptions, and deeper examination of dysconscious patterns of deficit thoughts held by leaders and/or teachers will help to mitigate racial erasure and move toward equitable practices (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). The additional examination of the how racism has impacted the educational system will deepen educators' understanding about the complexities around educational equity.

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is the ability of a person to have effective interactions with individuals or groups different from their cultural group. An educational leader must engage with students, staff, and the community in a culturally competent manner to effectively lead diverse school communities. In the cultural proficiency framework (Cross et al.,1989), cultural competence is defined as the standard of behavior that helps create a school environment that is equitable, inclusive, maintains a culture of high expectations with teacher support and resources to meet academic excellence, and builds high trust with the community (Lindsay et al., 2003).

Leadership Preparation for Cultural Competence. In 2009, Bustamante, Nelson, and Onwuegbuzie. conducted a mixed methods study gathering data from 151 school leaders to inform the fidelity and construct validity of an instrument, the Schoolwide Cultural Competence

Observation Checklist (SCCOC). An unexpected outcome of this study was implications for leadership preparation in cultural competence. The researchers' assumptions that school leaders would "value cultural competence and understand the importance of developing organizational cultural competence in their schools as a means to improve academic performance engagement and global diversity competencies of all students," (Bustamante, et al., 2009, p. 815-816), were found to be inaccurate. Instead, the study surfaced leaders' negative, and "culturally incapacitating" (Cross et al. 1989 p. 15) beliefs about cultural competence. Subsequently, the Bustamante et al. 2009 study developed the following recommendations for school leadership preparation: (a) developing individual cultural competence in school leaders with "development on awareness, knowledge, and skills through reflection activities" (p. 816), (b) experiential exercises and critical analysis of "personal biases, policy, and organizational culture" (p. 818) and (c) a holistic examination of school-wide practice toward diverse groups with an inquiry approach to examining the data.

Cultural competence is more than developing an awareness of one's self, it is also about increasing cultural knowledge, the developing cultural skills to effectively engage in cross-cultural interactions. Barakat, Reames, and Kensler (2019), interested in leadership preparation programs, conducted a quantitative, cross-sectional, causal-comparative research on the factors of cultural beliefs and motivation (CBM), cultural knowledge (CK), and cultural skills (CS). The research participants were 251 graduate students from 16 master's degree certification programs in educational leadership which promoted social justice and cultural competence in their coursework. The survey, an instrument designed by the study's researchers, was sent out to programs across the country. The internal consistency of the instrument showed a Cronbach's α of .851. The CBM had a stronger internal consistency with the Cronbach's α of 0.85, and the CS

had a Cronbach's α of 0.76. The CK had the weakest internal consistency with a Cronbach's α of 0.48 (Barakat, et al. 2018). The study surveyed students who were in a starting cohort and students in a graduating cohort. The findings from the study found a statistically positive effect on CK and "cultural beliefs of students; however, 'there did not seem to be a motivation to change behavior." (Barakat et al., 2012 p. 253). The study noted the students in the graduating cohort had a higher CBM than students in the beginning cohort, but questioned whether the graduating cohort were influenced by the university's explicit emphasis on social justice leadership in research and practice. This institution wide focus on this explicit or implicit expectation may have increased students' motivation for socially desirable responses (Barakat et al., 2019). The results of the analysis of CS did not show any statistical significance in cultural skills between the cohorts. This finding is of importance, because it warrants more exploration into cultural skill development. In an earlier study, Furman (2012) proposed that leadership preparation should encourage students to develop a critical consciousness about issues of cultural diversity and social justice, but found that the skills will take a longer time to develop. This study indicates skill development takes longer and requires more practice than attainment of knowledge or even a shift in beliefs (Barakat et al., 2019).

Both the Bustamante et al. (2009) and the Barakat et al. 2019 studies support the importance of cultural competence in educational leadership preparation. The following factors were discussed as relevant to the preparation of preservice leaders: cultural beliefs and motivation, cultural knowledge, self-awareness, self-reflection, experiential exercises, and inquiry. In the next section, leadership practices for cultural competency are examined.

Leadership Practices in Cultural Competency. Cultural competence is about self-awareness and actions for effective cross-cultural interactions, however with school leaders, their actions

should also promote effective cross-cultural interactions with their school community. The Essential Elements in the Cultural Proficiency Framework (Cross et al., 1989), define and name the standards for cultural competence, as the following: assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to differences, and institutionalizing cultural. The definition of leadership cultural competence in this study will take two of the cultural proficiency Essential Elements (EE) and align actions for leaders to supporting diverse school communities. The three actions are:

- A leader intentionally gaining awareness of their assumptions, biases, and beliefs. (Critical self-reflection)
- A leader valuing truly valuing differences as strengths, and not obstacles. (Valuing diversity)
- A leader taking actions towards creating inclusive classrooms and schools. (Valuing diversity and inclusiveness)

Critical self-reflection. Leaders are more likely to raise awareness of their own biases, beliefs, and assumptions; through self-reflection (Collay, 2014; Guerra, Nelson, Jacobs & Yamamura, 2013; Santamaria, 2014). These qualitative studies involved leaders who promoted social justice in education. In all three studies, the importance of self-reflection was identified by the participants as critical to understanding their own biases and awareness, especially with leadership preparation. However, the Guerra et al. (2013) study showed differences between the participants who were White and participants of color in their awareness and identity formation with race and ethnicity. While the racially diverse participants in Guerra et al.'s (2013) study entered the leadership preparation program with varying levels of understanding of inequities in schools, the research offered participants a means to share how critical self-reflection gave them

a means to grapple with the cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance is the mental stress or discomfort one experiences when holding two or more contradictory beliefs, values, or ideas (Brehm & Cohen, 1962). The cognitive dissonance that emerged for many White participants occurred as they learned about structural racism and realized the impact this practice had on Black and Hispanic students in their schools (Guerra et al. 2013). Additionally, the participants were also impacted by hearing the personal experiences of their classmates in the leadership preparation course who were impacted by racism (Guerra et al. 2013). The participants in the study who were from minority racial groups reported the self-reflection process validated their "awareness, knowledge, and experience" while "strengthening their self-concept and eliminating their self-doubts about their ability to lead," (Guerra et al., 2013, p. 143). White participants reported the self-reflection surfaced an "unsettling" feeling when learning about the nature of inequity and racism, causing them to believe "problems existed" and "to be concerned and create the desire to make change," (Guerra et al., 2013, p. 143). The opportunity to critically reflect as school leaders provides a means to surface cognitive dissonance and to become more comfortable with challenging thinking in a "safe environment" (Guerra, et al. 2013, p. 140). Critical self-reflection to examine cognitive dissonance is essential because research on school discipline has attributed implicit bias against African American students as a contributor to the disproportionate rates of referrals for these students (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Additionally, recognition of one's biases is critical for teachers regardless of race (Hernandez & Kose, 2012) as an examination of cultural competence includes biases based on gender, neurodiversity, sexual orientation, gender identity, country of origin, and other differences that may emerge in schools today (Nieto, 2008). This study argues that it is even more critical for school leaders to engage in the work of self-awareness so they can build a solid

foundation for their leadership identity in order to effectively lead their teachers, and build authentic relationships with students and the community.

Valuing diversity and inclusiveness. The second desirable characteristic of leaders is valuing diversity and working toward inclusiveness. Until the 1960s the U.S. was predominantly White and segregated. The Supreme Court ruling of Brown v. The Board of Education and the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawed discriminatory acts based on race, religion, color, sex, or national origin, and then enforced desegregation of schools. The need to value diversity in the schools and to create an inclusive environment is more than fifty years in the making. University courses offering leadership preparation courses can support future school based administrators by helping them discuss ways to value diversity and maximize the strengths of diverse school communities. A mixed methods study with candidates (n=221) from nine education leadership programs in Georgia Universities investigated the students' perception of how well the leadership preparation courses prepared them to have the knowledge, skill, and dispositions to be effective with diverse populations (Chan, 2006). The survey instrument was a 26-item Likert scale designed by the researcher, with questions derived from current literature preparing educational leaders for diversity. The quantitative results showed that the participants had an above average rating of the diversity component in their programs. Further investigation of the data revealed the rating was skewed due to higher ratings in one leadership program, which offered an independent course in multicultural education, (Chan, 2006). This finding indicates offering leaders an in-depth course on multicultural education with curriculum that is both relevant to their practice and exploring their own understanding of content and biases can result in both a positive emotional response and connection to the content (Hardiman, 2012) and a constructivist approach to the content in which the participants create meaning of the

knowledge, rather than acquire information (Ertmer & Newby (1993). All the respondents expressed anxiety about working and leading students from diverse backgrounds. The qualitative findings from 74 respondents recommended the following recommendations for inclusion in leadership preparation to address cultural competence and diversity, "(a) curriculum to infuse cultural diversity into educational leadership, (b) instructional strategies to help leadership candidates think diversely about leadership issues, (c) deeper exploration with the social, political, and economic impacts on the teaching and learning of education leadership, and (d) leadership development with diversity issues," (Chan, 2006, p. 9).

In conclusion, the need for school leaders to increase their cultural competence is important for leading diverse school communities. The lack of adequate preparation on the topic of cultural competence during the preservice leader's coursework is contributing to school leaders not being well prepared to lead in diverse environments. While cultural competence will support the individual leader's awareness and actions, awareness alone will not be enough to address systemic issues. The next factor, social justice is examined in the next section and will explore how school leaders can support systemic change.

Social Justice

Social justice has been defined as actions school leaders take to redress unjust school system and community policies or practices that have unfairly underserved marginalized populations while benefitting students in the dominant culture (Miller & Martin, 2015). Using the cultural proficiency EEs (Cross, et al. 1989), social justice in education can be examined in the following manner: (a) assessing history, laws, policies, economics and current socio-political climate to understanding systemic oppression and privilege (Bustamante, et al., 2009; Furman, 2012; Gooden & Doherty, 2015; Santamaria, 2014), (b) adapting to diversity and advocating to

ensure that race, gender identity, cognitive ability, sexual orientation, and other factors that have historically marginalized people, are now are treated with dignity and fairness (Theoharis, 2007), and (c) institutionalizing practices to meet the interests of all students (Franco, Robles, & Ott, 2011; Shields, 2014).

Leadership Preparation for Social Justice. Preparing educational leaders with a social justice lens is an urgent call to action propelled by current and projected changes in student demographics (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). Miller and Martin (2015) conducted a qualitative study with four principals randomly selected from a stratified population. The researchers used face-to-face semi-structured interviews, with 18 questions asking about perceptions of principals on the following areas: (a) effectiveness of their preparedness to lead demographically changing or urban schools with response to cultural responsiveness, education equity, and social justice, (b) creating conditions for the promotion of cultural responsiveness, education equity, and social justice in their schools, and (c) effectiveness in leading others in promoting cultural responsiveness, education equity, social justice. The small sample size is a limitation of this study, but the quality of data gathered from multiple sources offers rich insight into the leaders' perceptions of social justice. Data collected from phone interviews, observations at the schools, documents and the resulting data analysis supported the need for principals to become better prepared for leading diverse communities. The principals interviewed stated there may have been some coursework that addressed social justice, however, they were not given the time and opportunity to "gain a contextual or experiential understanding of diversity and equity within their preparation programs," (p. 137). In addition, during the interviews the principals "evaded, to some degree, the questions confronting systemic inequities and underlying organizational values and beliefs that contribute to inequitable practices," (p. 145). Previous research inferred

leadership preparation programs might touch on the knowledge needed for educational leadership, however supporting the preservice leaders in the skills to make the knowledge actionable is still lacking. The "evasion" of questions regarding systemic inequities, could imply a lack of understanding about the systemic inequities, or a resistance to examining organizational values and beliefs. The lack of understanding can be addressed with additional knowledge and increased awareness, but the resistance to examining organizational values and beliefs, will need to explore the underlying assumptions, values or beliefs supporting the resistance.

In order to gain in-depth knowledge about the complexity of preparing leaders for social justice work, Brown (2006) investigated two cohorts of 40 students in two-year Masters programs in School Administration. The study used a quasi-experimental method and an andragogical (art and science of helping others adults learn) framework which included adult learning theory, transformative theory, and critical social theory to examine leadership preparation. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the effects of transformative learning on future leaders supported findings that the transformative learning process increases awareness and actions toward socially just practices. This study used the Pettus and Allain (1999) Cultural and Educational Issues Survey (Version B), in addition to self-reflective collection of data through cultural autobiographies, reflective journals, life histories, prejudice reduction workshops, cross-cultural interviews, and activist action plans. The results: awareness of self, acknowledgment of others, and action for policy change all built the foundation for future researchers with similar themes. The value of highlighting the complexity of preparing leaders for using a social justice lens with a two-year, 40 participants, study offered a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis with three theories: adult learning, transformative learning, and critical social theory to examine leadership preparation.

Leadership Practices for Social Justice. An empirical qualitative study using autoethnography as a means to collect data from seven principals leading for social justice was conducted by Theoharis (2007). The study examined the following: (a) how principals enacted social justice, (b) resistance they faced, and (c) what strategies leaders used to sustain their actions for social justice. This study shifted the focus of research from the schools as the unit of analysis to studying principals. Through the snowball method the researcher identified seven principals who were also social justice advocates. The researchers selected principals who came from a broad range of diversity factors which include the following: seven urban schools in the Midwest, four led in secondary schools and three led elementary schools, one was Asian and five were White, one was gay and six were heterosexual, three were women and four were men with administrative experience between three and sixteen years (Theoharis, 2007).

The central definition of social justice in the Theoharis (2007) study "addresses and eliminates marginalization in schools….and inclusive practices for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs) and other students traditionally segregated in schools," (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223). The actions identified in the research to support student achievement were (a) ending tracking, pullout, or ability-base grouping, and including students receiving special education services in general education programs, (b) increasing rigor and access to opportunities, (c) empowering staff with on-going staff development on social justice, and addressing issues of race, (d) creating a purposely warm, and welcoming school climate and reaching out intentionally to the families and communities who were marginalized (Theoharis, 2007). The initial success in a case study of a White female principal and her school in DeMatthews' study (2015) focused on the positive changes for the students. While the changes benefitted the students, the teachers were aversive to the principal's actions. The principal did

not attend to the resistance from the teachers and as a result, many teachers left the school. The departure of the teachers subsequently led to the district level supervisor asking the principal to resign. Resistance by both the teachers and parents was a factor in DeMatthews' study (2015), with teachers trying to minimize or denigrate the importance of the social justice or using the union as their shield to refute changing their practice. The participants in the Theoharis's (2007) study also faced similar resistance from teachers and within the school district, however their use of proactive strategies such as communicating with staff and parents "purposely and authentically, developing a supportive administrative network, working together for change, keeping their eyes on the prize, prioritizing their work, engaging in professional learning and building relationships," (Theoharis, 2007, p. 244), helped them to manage the resistance to their social justice efforts. Participants in both studies stated a lack of comprehensive and actionable skills in their leadership preparation for social justice.

The literature on social justice supported the importance of social justice efforts to change policies and practices that are unjust to historically marginalized students (Miller & Martin, 2015; Shields, 2014). The minimal or surface level coursework with the topic of social justice during the preservice leaders' educational preparation can lead to evading deeper examination of systemic issues or organizational values and beliefs (Miller & Martin, 2015), and conversely, transformative learning experiences may lead to deeper awareness of self, and actions for social justice (Brown, 2006). A critical finding is the need to prepare leaders to manage the resistance to social justice efforts, while leaders learn to sustain themselves in leading for inclusive schools (Theoharis, 2007).

Summary of Factors and Underlying Causes

Figure 1 illustrated the conceptual framework with the key findings from this chapter and relationships between the factors and causes. The literature review surfaced the following factors for school administrators leading diverse school populations: (a) leadership knowledge in the areas of equity, cultural competence and social justice, (b) leaders' beliefs about and motivation for diversity, and (c) leadership skills to enact culturally proficient practices. The relationship between these factors is further discussed in this section.

Preparation courses that discuss values and beliefs on topics related to equity builds develops the leader's beliefs about diversity (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Shields, 2010). The literature suggests clearer definitions of equity may help leaders gain a deeper understanding so they are more reflective about their beliefs which may result in higher motivation to take actions in their practices (Miller & Martin, 2015; Vogel, 2011). The stronger the leaders are in their beliefs and motivation to address diversity effectively, the more they are able to understand and address the underlying causes of inequitable actions, which are equity traps consisting of dysconscious thinking, deficit views, and racial erasure (Brown, et al., 2011; Davis et al. 2015; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

Three of the studies reviewed support preparing leaders in cultural competence and the relationship with beliefs for diversity (Barakat et al. 2018; Bustamante et al., 2009, Guerra et al. 2013). The Bustamante et al. (2009) study surfaced that leaders might not value cultural competence and the resistance might be deeper than the harmful racial erasure (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). To counter the deeper negative beliefs about cultural competence, Bustamante et al. (2009) advises programs to develop experiential exercises that surface personal biases, and organizational culture. In addition, Barakat et al. 2018, were able to offer evidence to support

the relationship between the factors of cultural knowledge and cultural beliefs and motivation, but were not able to support this relationship with cultural skills.

The Barakat et al. (2018) study also proposed the cultural competence of school leaders "is at the heart of social justice" (p. 8), and further suggests "the school leader is influenced by personal attributes and experiences and by their preparation program (p. 8), elevating the importance of both the leadership preparation, and the interactive nature of how the preparation program may influence the leaders' beliefs and motivations for diversity. Two additional studies amplify the importance of social justice in leadership preparation, while stating concerns with the lack of in depth, and transformative learning opportunities that will help leaders examine beliefs and motivation for social justice (Brown, 2006; Miller & Martin, 2015). The underlying cause of not preparing leaders for social justice is time and resistance from leaders to become more self-reflective. Thus, with leadership preparation courses not giving higher importance to understanding the importance of social justice in education, the potential leaders may be less prepared to take actions for social justice once they become school administrators.

The leader's beliefs and motivation for diversity are relevant factors related to leadership skills for the EE of cultural proficiency (Cross et al. 1989). Skills such as building critical self-reflection, mitigating deficit thinking, addressing the impact of racism in the schools and society, increasing rigor for students, and offering and participating in ongoing professional learning on the topics around diversity and inclusion are supported by the research (Cooper, 2009; DeMatthews, 2015; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis, 2007; Shields, 2010).

Chapter Two

Needs Assessment

The literature review informed the identification of three significant factors contributing to school leaders' gap in their leadership preparation for leading diverse school communities, equity, cultural competence, and social justice. The needs assessment investigated the following areas: (a) leadership preparation in cultural competence, social justice, or equity, (b) if participants had courses on those topics in their leadership preparation, what their perceptions on the relevance of the coursework was to help lead diverse school communities, (c) perceptions of the cultural proficiency professional learning (CPPL) from school leaders, (d) values identified by school leaders as important to leading school communities, and (e) demographic data, such as race and ethnicity, number of years in leadership positions, and values and beliefs affecting school leadership practices. In addition, the analysis of the findings from the needs assessment will be assessed for alignment with the EST theoretical framework, practices in the cultural proficiency EEs and the conceptual framework.

Context of Study

This study focuses on a high performing school district in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. This setting has both its share of opportunities and challenges. The district is suburban and located between two metropolitan cities, with economic opportunities both in the county and in the neighboring cities. While the district has the perception of welcoming racial and socioeconomic diversity since 1967 when a land developer intentionally sold homes to African American and interracial families in the suburbs prior to the passage of the Fair Housing Act; the county has remained economically and racially segregated in the rural areas. Over the last two decades the population of the county has been changing, and in 2013, with an increase

of immigrant populations coming to the county and into the schools, the school district is now a minority majority. The 2016 demographics of the students, teachers and leadership are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2

Racial/Ethnic Demographic Comparisons of District's Students, Teachers, Principals, & Assistant Principals from 76 Schools

Race/Ethnicity	Students n=54,870	Teachers n=4551	Principals n=76	Assistant Principals n=119
Am. Indian/AK Native	120	13	0	0
Asian	11,151	142	1	3
Black/African American	12,324	422	13	32
HI/Pac. Islander	73	3	0	0
Hispanic/Latinx	5128	136	1	0
White	22,380	3,803	60	81
Two or more races	3,390	52	1	0

Note. The racial/ethnicity categories are directly from the reporting from the district which uses federal reporting guidelines. AK= Alaskan Native; HI/Pac. Islander= Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

The data in the table show how the teachers', principals', and assistant principals' racial and ethnic backgrounds are not reflective of the student population in the district. The district has strategic goals to increase the hiring and retention of diverse teachers and administrators from varying racial/ethnic backgrounds who bring different professional experiences to enrich the learning environments within the school district. Increasing the cultural competence of all the teaching staff and leadership in the county will also better meet the best interests of all students. Many students are excelling at the highest levels in test performance and SAT scores, and the school system ranks first in the state High School Assessments (HSA) (Sage Policy Inc., 2016);

however, state assessments indicate gaps in test performance with only 77.7% of African American and 84.4% of Hispanic twelfth graders passing high school assessments in comparison with 96.4% of White and 95.7% of Asian students (MSDE, 2016). At the district level, the students' test performance scores are higher than the state average, with 93.9% of African American and 94.5 % of Hispanic students passing, but in comparison, more than 95.0% of White and Asian students are passing the high school assessments. The graduation rate also shows a difference with 90.3% of African American, 81.4% of Hispanic/Latinx students, and more than 95.0% of White and Asian students graduating in a four-year cohort. The data reveal African American and Hispanic students have different performance outcomes from their White and Asian counterparts on both standardized tests and graduations rates (Barton, 2010). Working toward equity for all students will require dynamic leadership that creates inclusive and equitable environments and teacher practices based on positive teacher-student relationships.

Statement of Purpose

The first phase of this research is the needs assessment study, which explores three factors relevant in leadership preparation to supporting school leaders with leading diverse school communities: equity, cultural competence and social justice. The knowledge of those three factors influence the leaders' beliefs about diversity and subsequent motivation to take culturally proficient actions towards inclusion. In this chapter the findings of a needs assessment surveying the school administrators about their leadership preparation in equity, cultural competence, and social justice are shared. In addition, the survey asked school leaders about their participation in the CPPL offered in the school district. This study will contribute to empirical research by examining whether the EE of cultural proficiency are aligned with

leadership practices for equity, cultural competence, and social justice. The research questions guiding this study are:

RQ1: What is the relationship between school administrators' leadership preparation in pre-service courses focused on equity, cultural competence, and social justice and their beliefs about cultural competence, equity, and social justice?

RQ2: What is the relationship between school administrators' leadership preparation in the topics of equity, cultural competence, and social justice and their beliefs about their efficacy to lead diverse student communities?

RQ3: What is the relationship between school administrators' participation in the in-service cultural proficiency professional learning and their beliefs about cultural proficiency, equity, and social justice?

RQ4: What is the relationship between school administrators' participation in the in-service cultural proficiency seminars and their efficacy to lead diverse school communities?

RQ5: What are the participants' perceptions of their past participation in the in-service cultural proficiency seminars in supporting their skills with the EEs aligned to equity, cultural competence and/or social justice?

RQ6: What values do school administrators perceive as important to leading diverse school communities?

Definition of Terms

1. Cultural Proficiency- A framework and process that offers an individual or organization an opportunity to examine their values, behaviors, policies and practices to more effectively engage in diverse environments. The framework includes four tools that

provide common language and self-reflective measures for individuals and organizations: The Cultural Proficiency Continuum, The Guiding Principles, The Essential Elements (EE), and Understanding the Barriers to Cultural Proficiency (Cross et al. 1989; Lindsey et al., 2005).

2. Cultural Competence- The ability of a person to have effective cross-cultural interactions, deeper understanding of diverse perspectives, and deeper understanding of one's biases. This included an understanding systems of privilege, and oppression and how their own identity may have impacted their worldview. Cultural competence is within the Cultural Proficiency EE as the standard for behavior when interacting with individuals or groups different from their cultural group. The standards for cultural competence (a) assess culture which begins with an assessing inward, with one's self, and then external assessing of groups, school, district, etc., (b) value diversity which includes a broader and holistic approach to diversity and includes different perspectives, ideas, norms, behaviors, etc. beyond surface differences, (c) manage the dynamics of difference in which leaders expect conflict to arise, and leverage different perspective for better outcomes, (d) adapt for differences which involves changing practices, to create inclusive environments, and (e) institutionalize the cultural knowledge where one is expected to advocate to change policies and practices to disrupt unfair outcomes.
3. Equity- Ensuring students from all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and sexual and gender identity groups are achieving academically and included in the school community. Leadership practices to ensure equity include assessing and ensuring fairness with access to opportunities recognizing educational environments and societal structures that have not historically been equitable to all student groups.

4. Cultural Proficiency Professional Learning (CPPL) - A series of multi-day (5-day) professional learning sessions that were based on transformative learning and offered by the school district involved in the study.
5. Social Justice- Actions school leaders take to redress unjust school system and community policies or practices that unfairly underserve marginalized populations while benefitting students in the dominant culture.

Methodology for the Needs Assessment

Participant Identification and Selection. Participation in this study was extended to a sample of 193 school administrators (principals and assistant principals) and the survey was completed by 112 participants employed by a Mid-Atlantic school district. The respondents were the leaders of preK-12 and three special schools with a total of 46% of the principals (*n*=52) in the district and 54% of the assistant principals (*n*=60) and resulted in a 58% response rate. The school administrators worked in this school district ranging from two years to more than thirty-one years; under 2 years 3% (*n*=3), 3-10 years 16% (*n*=19), 11-20 years 48% (*n*=53), 21- 30 years 28% *(n*=31), and more than 31 years 5% (*n*=6). Additionally, 33% (*n*=37) of the respondents were male and 67% (*n*=75) were female. The race/ethnic categories were self-reported by respondents and then grouped into White/Caucasian, African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latinx, and Two or more races. The person who identified as White/Jewish was placed into the White/Caucasian category. The racial/ethnic demographics are as follows: Hispanic/Latinx 1% (*n*=1), two or more races, 1% (*n*=1), Asian/Pacific Islander 3% (*n*=3), African American /Black 30% (*n*=34), and White 65% (*n*=73). The highest educational background of the administrators was self-reported as the following: doctorate 7% (*n*=8), masters +30 credits 25% (*n*=28), and master's degree and an administrative certificate (referred to in the

study as "Masters + ANS") 67% (*n*=75). One person reported “other” as their educational background, but did not offer additional information.

Instrument. The survey instrument, titled, Examining Leadership Preparation and Professional Development Towards Equitable and Culturally Proficient Actions, and located in Appendix A, was developed by the researcher for this needs assessment. The instrument was developed under the supervision of an adviser and a professor in a doctoral level research and methods course. The online survey questions were developed after examining the items on following instruments: Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (Henry, 1986), School-Wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist (Bustamante, Nelson & Onwuegbuzie, 2009), and Survey of Multicultural Educational Concepts (Moore, Reeves-Kazelskis, 1992). The items on the aforementioned instruments neither measured the types of leadership preparation nor the professional learning, and the survey questions asking about leadership preparation in Vogel (2011) were not grounded in the EEs for cultural proficiency (Cross, et al. 1989). As a result, an instrument was developed to obtain data to inform this study about the types of leadership preparation and professional learning the leaders attended and their perceptions of how those experiences influenced their leadership with diverse school communities. After the survey was developed by this researcher, it was reviewed by this researcher’s advisor in the doctoral program, the research and methods professor, and the Mid-Atlantic School District’s Assessment office and modified with feedback at the three levels of review.

The purpose of the needs assessment is to develop an understanding of the coursework current school administrators may have during their leadership preparation classes with the factors of cultural competence, equity, and social justice. In addition to the information about the principals’ leadership preparation coursework, the needs assessment also collected data on the

types of in-service professional learning the school administrators attended post appointment to assistant principal or principal in the district. The rationale in collecting data on the type of professional development only after the respondents became school administrators, was to determine the types of professional learning they invested their limited time in to support their leadership.

The 27 item survey, displayed in Table 3 consisted of the following: four open-ended questions regarding coursework or professional development in cultural competence, equity, and social justice, one open-ended question about the values leaders believe are essential to leading diverse school communities, a checklist asking about skills gained from in-service offered by the county on cultural proficiency aligned to cultural competence, equity, and social justice, and six multiple-choice questions regarding demographic information. The demographic data requested included the following: (a) number of years as an educator, (b) years in district, (c) years in current role, (d) years at current school, (e) school level. Participants were given two fill in the blank questions for gender identity and racial/ethnic identity. Additionally, five Likert scale questions ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) investigated the research questions on belief statements with cultural competence, equity, social justice, cultural proficiency, and leadership preparation. The questions regarding gender identity and racial/ethnic identity were written as open-ended in order to model cultural competence and not require school leaders to fit into categories created by the researcher. The instrument created for this study was developed from extant literature and overlaps the Cultural Proficiency EEs with a focus on cultural competence, equity, and social justice.

Table 3

Instrument Questions, Essential Elements, and Research Questions

Research Question	Factor(s) from Conceptual Framework	Instrument Item(s)
RQ1: What is the relationship between school administrators' leadership preparation in pre-service courses focused on equity, cultural competence, and social justice and their beliefs about cultural competence, equity, and social justice?	Leadership Preparation in Equity, Cultural Competence, and Social Justice	10) In your university or college courses for leadership preparation, did you take any of the following: (check all that apply) ● Cultural Competence ● Equity ● Social Justice ● None of the Above
	Leadership Beliefs/Motivation for Diversity	The following question used a Likert scale: 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree 25) I believe I have been adequately prepared to be an effective leader for diverse school communities.
RQ2: What is the relationship between school administrators' leadership preparation in the topics equity, cultural competence, and social justice and their beliefs in leading diverse student communities?	Leadership Preparation (professional development, after completing courses to become an administrator) in Equity, Cultural Competence, and Social Justice	10) In your university or college courses for leadership preparation, did you study any of the following topics: (check all that apply) ● Cultural Competence ● Equity ● Social Justice ● None of the Above
		The following questions used a Likert scale 1 2 3 4 5

		Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree 27) I believe I have the skills to be an effective leader in schools with diverse school populations.
RQ3: What is the relationship between school administrators' participation in in-service cultural proficiency professional learning and their beliefs about cultural proficiency, equity, and social justice?	Leadership Preparation in cultural proficiency	18) If you have taken a cultural proficiency seminar provided by the district, what type have you taken? ● None ● Awareness ● Application ● Facilitation
	Leadership Beliefs/Motivation for Diversity	The following questions used a Likert scale: 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree 22) I believe cultural proficiency is important to valuing all students. 23) I believe equity is important to increase student achievement for all our students. 24) I believe social justice is important to correct unjust policies and practices for all students.

RQ4: What is the relationship between school administrators' participation in the in-service cultural proficiency seminars and their efficacy to lead diverse school communities?	Leadership preparation in cultural proficiency	18) If you have taken a cultural proficiency seminar provided by the district, what type have you taken? ● None ● Awareness ● Application ● Facilitation
	Leadership Skills	The following questions used a Likert scale: 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree 27) I believe I have the skills to be an effective leader in schools with diverse school populations.
RQ5: What are the participants' perceptions of their past participation in the in-service cultural proficiency seminars in supporting their skills with the EEs aligned to equity, cultural competence and/or social justice?		19) If you have taken cultural proficiency seminars offered by HCPSS, in what ways did it either prepare you for your current role, or enhance your skills in this role? (Check all that apply) ● Having an awareness of my own assumptions, biases, and beliefs ● Valuing diversity and working towards inclusiveness ● Engaging in difficult dialogue about meeting the needs of all students ● Creating school environments that are safe and secure for all students ● Ensuring high expectations for all students ● Ensuring all students get what they need, when they need it for success ● Understanding systemic oppression and privilege

		● Creating a shared vision for all students benefitting academically ● Advocating for students who have been historically marginalized ● Not Applicable ● Other:
RQ6: What values do school administrators perceive as important to leading diverse school communities?	Leadership Beliefs/Motivation for Diversity	26) I believe the following values are essential to leading diverse school communities? (Write in answer).

Reliability. The reliability of the survey was tested with internal consistency (Schutt, 2015) of questions regarding coursework and professional development being asked more than once in the survey, but in different ways. Two questions about leadership preparation, one about the courses and the other about coursework on equity, cultural competence, or social justice, and three questions specifically about the courses in equity, cultural competence, and social justice were tested for internal consistency and the five items were determined to have a Cronbach's Alpha $\propto$ of 0.76 which is in the acceptable range for reliability. Three questions pertaining to the EEs on the topics of equity, cultural competence and social justice were analyzed for internal consistency. The factors for cultural competence resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.93, signifying an excellent internal consistency for cultural competence, social justice $\propto$0.87, indicating a good reliability for social justice, and for equity $\propto$0.71, indicating an acceptable range for reliability for the questions regarding equity (www.study.com/academy/lesson/test-retest-reliability).

Validity. To increase the reliability and validity of the survey, cognitive interviews (Schutt, 2015) were conducted for the needs assessment prior to sending the survey out to the 193 school administrators. Cognitive interviews help the survey designer explore with selected respondents their understanding of survey items. The purpose of the cognitive interview is to assess if the intent of the question is understood by the respondent (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). A 'think aloud" process is used with the respondents with each item to clarify their thinking in answering the survey item, this process serves as a "tool of inquiry to validly and reliably capture the respondents' experiences." (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004 p. 6).

Seven potential participants were invited to participate in the cognitive interviews based on proximity to the researcher, diversity of gender, role, race, and the diversity of school levels.

Of the seven invited participants, only three people were able to participate in the cognitive interviews. Emails were sent to the three participants, and a follow up call was made to explain the process and schedule a time for the cognitive interview. While the sample size of three is small, Willis (1999) contends the purpose of cognitive interviews is qualitative and not statistical estimation, and so variation with the participants is more relevant to the sample. As indicated earlier, a diversity of perspectives with gender, role (principal or assistant principal, race and school level (elementary, middle, and high), were considered with inviting the participants to the cognitive interviews.

The participants participating in the cognitive interview varied in gender, length of time as an administrator, role, age, experiences as an educator, and types of schools (e.g., high school, elementary, and alternative school). The details of the interviewees are the following: one principal and two assistant principals, two female and one male, two identified as White and one as African American, two worked in this district for 11-20 years and one 21-30 years and one was a former social studies teacher, one a former special educator, and one a former primary educator. This researcher met one-on-one with each of the participants to listen to their responses and reactions to each survey item during a "think aloud," which is a process for "respondents to talk through their thought process as they answer questions on the survey," (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004, p. 6). During the "think aloud" interview, this researcher sat with the respondents and asking each question and how they would respond out loud to the question (Willis, 1999). In addition, "general probes" (Willis, 1999 p. 6) were asked to assess for clarity of the questions, if the questions were easy or hard to answer, and general feedback on the survey items. The process and changes made from the cognitive interview are identified in the next paragraph.

The interviews were conducted one-on-one with each respondent and the same researcher. First, the respondents were given a hard copy of the survey so they could view the questions as the interviewer read the questions to them. Second, after the researcher read the question, the respondent was asked if the question was clear. Third, the respondent was asked how they would respond to the question. Fourth, the researcher asked how the person arrived at their response. During this process, the researcher would take notes next to each question document the respondent's responses. This process follows recommended procedures for cognitive interviews (Tourangeau, 1984; Willis,1999) The first two of the three cognitive interviews were conducted on the same day and had similar reactions to Questions 7, 12, and 13, which was a lack of clarity with the responses given on Question 7 and confusion about what was being asked in Questions 12 and 13. When the respondents were asked what they were thinking as they answered Question 7, they both independently stated they were unsure if they could answer Question 7 accurately with the response choices offered. The confusion was based on the leadership preparation requirements in this study's Mid-Atlantic state, but not general requirements for becoming an administrator. For questions 12 and 13, both expressed confusion as to whether the question inquired about the course they took at a college or university for their leadership preparation or though the district for professional learning. Table 4 displays the original question and the revised question after the cognitive interview. The third cognitive interview was conducted on a different day and during the cognitive interview the respondent did not report any confusion with the questions and notes during the interview indicate a stronger understanding of the questions.

Table 4

Comparison of Original and Revised Question After Cognitive Interviews

Original Question	Revised Question
Q7) Level of Education for Leadership Preparation ● Master's Certificate ● Masters ● Doctorate ● Other	Q7) Level of Education for Leadership Preparation ● Masters +ANS ● Masters + 30 ● Doctorate ● Other
Q12) What other topics or classes did you take in your leadership preparation that helped your leadership in school with diverse school populations?	Q12) What other topics or classes helped you prepare for schools with diverse populations (at the university/college level)?
Q13) What other topics or classes did you take in your leadership preparation that helped your leadership towards equitable school environments?	Q13) What other topics or classes helped you prepare to lead school toward equitable environments (at the university/college level)?
	New question
	Q25) I believe I have been adequately prepared to be an effective leader for diverse school communities.

Note. Masters + ANS= Master's degree plus the Administration and Certification Masters Certification from an accredited college or university. This certification is a requirement in the state this study is being conducted. Masters +30= Master's degree and 30 graduate level credits.

Procedures

Data Collection. The participants for this study were a convenience sample of principals and assistant principals recruited from a Mid-Atlantic public school system via email, during the summer of 2017. While school administrators work over the summer, the students and teachers are not in school. The surveys were sent out mid-July, which conflicted with vacations for many of the administrators. The emails were sent from the researcher using Google Forms from a non-

district email ID, but were sent to the administrators' district email ID. The responses of the participants were returned anonymously to the Google Form. A week after the first email, a reminder email was sent at the start of the week. After two weeks, a third reminder was sent mid-day with a request to complete the survey before the weekend. An additional email was sent the following week, with a final request and extension of three days. After the final request, an additional 32 responses were submitted (N=112) for a 58% response rate.

Data Analysis. Google Analytics summarized the initial responses from the data collected by the survey. The data were viewed and cleaned in Google Sheets. Some initial changes made in Google Sheets to simplify the data had to do with the coding of their racial/ethnic category. Caucasian/White were placed into one response category, and African American/Black into one response category. While the respondents were given the agency to self-identify, the responses were narrowed into racial/ethnic categories, to include the identifying responses of the participants. The data were then saved to an Excel spreadsheet and then uploaded into SPSS for further quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis. The first step in SPSS was to assign numeric value to data which was used for descriptive statistics. The following data were changed from string data to numeric: gender, race, educational level, courses taken in equity, cultural competence, and social justice, years as an educator, years in district, role (principal or assistant principal), years in role, years in school, school level, belief statements about equity, cultural competence, and social justice, and professional learning in cultural proficiency. After the data were prepared for analysis in SPSS, then tests for normality were conducted for the variables addressed in the research question. Then a correlation test was determined based on the outcomes for normality of the data distribution.

*Qualitative Analysis***.** Answers from short answer and fill in the blank questions from the survey were retained in SPSS as words. The data were printed out and then and initial review of the words were reviewed. The data were then quantized, meaning words were given numerical value (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2003). Responses noted by more than one respondent were tallied to identify qualitative data for further analysis. The data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) two-cycle coding method. The first cycle coding was for "values coding" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75), this type of coding was selected because the qualitative question specifically asked about respondents' values. The second cycle coding used deductive coding with themes from the EEs, so the data were analyzed to see if they were aligned with: (a) assessing self and systems, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing for differences, (d) adapting for differences, and (e) institutionalizing policies and practices. Lastly the data were then analyzed to assess if valued identified by the participants drew upon themes that were consistent with EST.

Findings

This section presents both the qualitative and quantitative data from the needs assessment. The quantitative questions investigated the administrators' beliefs about three factors extant literature identified as important to preparing leaders to work with diverse school communities which are equity, cultural competence, and social justice. The last two quantitative questions explored the leaders' beliefs about their leadership preparation and if they believe they have the skills to effectively lead schools with diverse populations. The qualitative findings will report on the values that leaders believe are important to leading diverse school communities.

Leadership Preparation Courses.

The first research question explored the relationship between the leadership preparation of the participants prior to them becoming school administrators, to their current beliefs about how adequately they were prepared to lead diverse school communities. First, the data were analyzed to explore the frequencies of the courses. These data are summarized in Table 5 *Leadership Preparation in Equity, Cultural Competence, and Social Justice*. The table shows the percentage of current leaders who had courses on the key factors the literature described as important for leading diverse school communities. The responses from the participants show more than half of current school administrators, 62% (*n*=70) did not have any courses on the topics of equity, cultural competence, or social justice in their master's certification to become a school administrator. Further analysis of the data investigated the frequencies of topics and combination of topics respondents took during their leadership preparation. The number of participants who took a course that included the topic of cultural competence was also low, only 7% (*n*=8). Social justice, the last factor identified by the literature as relevant for leading diverse school communities, had the lowest reporting of participants taking a course on social justice, 6% (*n*=7). Table 6 *Descriptive Statistics of Leadership Courses in Equity, Cultural Competence, and Social Justice*, shows the results of the test for normality, and the skewness for leadership courses 1.43 (SE=.23) falls outside of the normal distribution, but the kurtosis .77 (SE=.45) is within the normal range. After examining the data on the preservice leadership courses, a second round of coding was conducted to consolidate the participation of the courses, equity, cultural competence, and social justice into the following categories: 1= no courses, 2= one course (equity, cultural competence, or social justice), 3= two courses (any combination), and 4= (all three courses). The rationale for the transforming the data is, a person who has taken more courses in the identified factors, equity, cultural competence, or social justice has increased

knowledge, was more likely to believe they have been better prepared to lead diverse school communities.

Table 5

Frequency for courses in Equity, Cultural Competence, and Social Justice (*N*=112)

	None	Equity	CC	SJ	CC & Equity	CC & SJ	Equity & SJ	Equity, CC, & SJ
Courses	63%(*n*=70)	7%(*n*=8)	7%(*n*=8)	6%(*n*=7)	6%(*n*=7)	2%(*n*=2)	2%(*n*=2)	7%(*n*=8)

Note. None= no courses on the topics equity, cultural competence, or social justice. CC= cultural competence. SJ= social justice

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Leadership Courses in Equity, Cultural Competence, and Social Justice (*N*=112)

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Leadership Courses	2.29	2.04	1.43 (.23)	.77 (.45)

Note. SD= Standard deviation, the standard error for skewness and kurtosis are Given in parenthesis after the scores for each.

Because the courses focused on equity, cultural competence, and social justice are given equal value in this study, an ordinal scale was created to equate a higher value with more discrete courses taken by leaders during their leadership preparation. The findings from the second analysis is summarized in Table 7, and will be used to address the research questions. The findings illuminate, 63% (*n*=70) had no courses in any of the three topics, 20% (*n*=23) had at least one course on one of the topics, 10% (*n*=11) had two courses, and 7% (*n*=3) had all three courses. The skewness 1.38 (.23) is positively skewed, however, while the distribution indicated a peak, the kurtosis .81 (.45) indicated rest of the distribution was relatively flat. The data are displayed in Table 8.

Table 7

Frequency of Number of Courses Taken During Leadership Preparation (*N*=112)

	None	One Course	Two Courses	Three Courses
Courses taken	63% (n=70)	20% (n=23)	10% (n=11)	7% (n=8)

Note. None= no courses in equity, cultural competence, or social justice. One Course- in equity, cultural competence or social justice. Two Courses- any combination of equity, cultural competence, or social justice. Three Courses- equity, cultural competence, and social justice were taken during leadership preparation.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of Leadership Courses During Leadership Prepar*ation (*N*=112)

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Leadership Courses	1.62	.932	1.38 (.23)	.81 (.45)

Note. SD= Standard deviation, the standard error for skewness and kurtosis are Given in parenthesis after the scores for each.

Leadership Preparation and Beliefs. The first two research questions explore the participants' relationship with their beliefs about cultural competence, equity and social justice and preservice leadership courses they may have taken.

RQ1 What is the relationship between school administrators' leadership preparation in pre-service courses focused on equity, cultural competence, and social justice and their beliefs about cultural competence, equity, and social justice?

RQ2 What is the relationship between school administrators' leadership preparation on the topics of equity, cultural competence, and social justice and their beliefs about their efficacy to lead diverse school communities?

A comparison of means with school administrators who have not taken any courses in cultural competence, equity or social justice with beliefs about whether they believe those topics are important to serving all students are summarized in Table 9. Findings comparing the participants who have taken courses in all, or a combination of the courses could not be conducted due the low sample size. The sample of participants who have not had any courses on the aforementioned topics (n=70) offered a large enough sample to analyze, with a skewness 1.38 (SE= 0.23). The means for beliefs are as follows*: I believe cultural proficiency is important to valuing all students.* M=4.87 (SD= 0.38*), I believe equity is important to increase student achievement for all students*. M= 4.91 (SD= 0.31), and *I believe social justice is import to correct unjust policies and practices for all students*. 4.83 (SD= 0.45). The results establish the participants' beliefs about cultural proficiency, equity, and social justice were within (.08) difference and a skewness (.14). To further explore the data, the comparison of means was conducted between the racial groups.

Table 9

Comparison of Means Between Beliefs About Cultural Proficiency, Equity, and Social Justice and Lack of Leadership Courses (*n*=70)

		Beliefs Cultural Proficiency M (SD)	Belief Equity M (SD)	Belief Social Justice M (SD)
No Courses	Means	4.87 (.38)	4.91 (.31)	4.83 (.45)

Note. M=Mean, SD= standard deviation which is in the parenthesis.

The racial categories were self-reported by the participants and then categorized by the researcher. As previously mentioned the participants' self-reports of racial groups is as follows: Hispanic/Latinx 1% (*n*=1), two or more races, 1% (*n*=1), Asian/Pacific Islander 3% (*n*=3), African American /Black 30% (*n*=34), and White 65% (*n*=73). The term Additional Races is used to include the data on Hispanic/Latinx, two or more races, and Asian/Pacific Islander, this term is used to counter the "othering" of people who do not identify as African American or White. While the number of participants the Additional Races category is significantly lower than those in the other two categories, the findings of the data is presented to ensure visibility of this group. These data comparing the beliefs of the participants by racial categories are presented in Table 10. A statistical test of significance was conducted with the data from the White and Black/African American groups. Black/African American participants reported higher Beliefs about Cultural Proficiency (*M*= 4.97, *SD*=. 17) compared to White participants (*M*=4.78, *SD*= .47) *t* (102) =2.2, *p*< .05. The beliefs about equity did not render any statistical significance, with Black/African American participants (*M*=4.97, *SD* = .17), and White participants (*M*=4.90, *SD*= .34), *t* (105) =1.1, *p*=.03. Lastly, in analyzing the beliefs about social justice, Black/African

American participants (*M*=4.95, *SD*= .24) compared with White participants (*M*=4.67, *SD*= .67) *t*= (105) =2.3, *p*< .05 indicating significance.

The Additional Race participants (*n*=5) consisted of Latinx (*n*=1), two or more races (*n*=1), and Asian (*n*=3), showed the Cultural Proficiency *M*=5.00 (*SD*=0) and Social Justice *M*=4.80 (*SD*=.45). While the participants in this group are less than five, it is important to share the findings in order to elevate the visibility of these participants, and not further marginalize their perspective. Further qualitative analysis, may offer insight into the experiences of the Additional Races.

Table 10

Comparison of Means Between Races and Beliefs about Cultural Proficiency, Equity, Social Justice, Leadership Preparation, and Skills (N=112)

Beliefs	African American (n=35) M (SD)	Additional Races* (n=5) M (SD)	White (n=72) M (SD)
Cultural Proficiency	4.97 (.17)	5.00 (0)	4.78 (.47)
Equity	4.97(.17)	4.80 (.45)	4.90 (.34)
Social Justice	4.95 (.24)	4.80 (.45)	4.67 (.67)
Adequate Leadership Preparation	4.18 (.72)	4.00 (.71)	4.01 (.87)
Skills for Effective Leadership	4.44 (.56)	4.40 (.55)	4.32 (.80)

Note. Additional Races is comprised of people identifying as Asian, one person two or more races, and one person as Hispanic/Latinx.

The results of the second research question, shown in Table 11, displays school administrators' beliefs about their leadership preparation and their skills to lead diverse school

communities. The display shows the comparison of means between participants who have not taken any of the courses in equity, cultural competence, or social justice, and participants who have taken at least one course. The school administrators not having taken any courses have lower beliefs about their preparation to lead diverse schools (M=3.93, SD=.91) $t(91)$= -1.007, p=.005 than school administrators who reported having taken at least one course (M=4.13, SD= .55). The t-test analyzing the beliefs to adequately lead diverse school communities resulting in no significant statistical significance between the two means.

Table 11

Comparison of Means Between Beliefs About Leadership Preparation, Skills to Lead Diverse School Communities and Leadership Courses

Beliefs	No Courses (n=70) M (SD)	One Course (n=23) M (SD)
Adequately Prepared to Lead	3.93(.91)	4.13(.55)
Skills to Effectively Lead	4.26(.79)	4.30(.56)

Cultural Proficiency Professional Learning and Beliefs. The findings in this section first shows the school administrators' participation in the various in-service CPPL offered in the district. Second, an exploration into school administrators' beliefs about cultural proficiency, equity, social justice in examined, and third, their beliefs about their skills to lead diverse school communities is investigated. The frequencies, shown in Table 12 *Frequency of Participation in CPPL* indicate more than half of the respondents 56.3 % (n=63) have participated in an *Awareness Seminar,* with 22.3 % (n=25) having participated in an *Application Seminar*. Only 7% (n=8) have completed the most comprehensive level of training, the third level titled,

Facilitation, while 14.3% (*n*=16) have not participated in any CPPL. The descriptive statistics summarized in Table 13 *Descriptive Statistics of Participation in CPPL* show the skewness .52 (.23) and kurtosis .13 (.45) are within the range of normality. The tests for normality indicated normal distribution for the data reported on the participation CPPL.

With the test of normality indicating a normal distribution, the next analysis was to determine relationships between participation in the professional learning and administrators' beliefs. First, Chi-square tests for association were used to examine the relationship between the CPPL and participants' beliefs about cultural proficiency, equity, cultural competence, and social justice. Second, an ANOVA was run to compare the means of the beliefs about skills with the participation with the different levels of professional learning. The findings from both tests are described below. The two tests were used to investigate the following research questions:

> RQ3: What is the relationship between school administrators' participation in the in-service cultural proficiency professional learning and their beliefs about cultural proficiency, equity, and social justice?
>
> $H_{0:}$ There is no relationship with school administrators' participation in cultural proficiency professional learning seminars and their beliefs about cultural proficiency, equity, and social justice.
>
> RQ4: What is the relationship between school administrators' participation in the in-service cultural proficiency seminars and their efficacy to lead diverse school communities?
>
> $H_{0:}$ There is no relationship between school administrators' participation in the in- service cultural proficiency seminars and their efficacy to lead diverse school communities.

Table 12

Frequency of Participation in CPPL (N=112)

	None	Awareness	Application	Facilitation
Participation	14.3% (*n*=16)	56.3% (*n*=63)	22.3% (*n*=25)	7.1% (*n*=8)

Note. None= no participation in CPPL. Awareness= participation in the level one training focused on awareness. Application= participation in a level two training focused on applying the tools of cultural proficiency; participation in application is only available after participation in awareness. Facilitation= participation in a level three training in which the skills of facilitating groups in a cultural proficient manner is the focus. Participants had to have completed Level One-Awareness and Level Two-Application to participate in Level Three-Facilitation.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics of Participation in CPPL (*N*=112)

	Mean	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Participation in Professional Learning	2.22	2	.78	.52 (.23)	.13 (.45)

Note. SD= Standard deviation, the standard error for skewness and kurtosis are Given in parenthesis after the scores for each.

The Chi-square test cross tabulates the expected counts with the actual counts to determine the independent variable has an association with the dependent variable. The first cross-tabulation, examined participation in the CPPL and beliefs about the topics of cultural proficiency, equity, cultural competence, and social justice being important to leading diverse school communities. The results of all four of the Chi-square tests did not yield statistically significant results in relations. To investigate the next research question on the CPPL with the beliefs about skills to lead diverse school communities an ANOVA was selected.

An ANOVA examines the differences in means, and was selected to examine the means of the respondents' participation in CPPL and their beliefs about the skills to lead diverse school communities. The means, displayed in Table 14, are the following: participants with no PD was *M*=4.44 (*SD*=.63), participants attending Level One Awareness *M*=4.25 (*SD*= .72), participants completing Level Two Application *M*=4.32 (*SD*= .85) and with participants completing Level Three Facilitation, *M*=4.63 (*SD*=.51), the F=0.78 (p >.05) and thus the null hypothesis is not

rejected. The statistical analysis of the data suggests participation or nonparticipation in the different levels of CPPL does not affect beliefs about their skills to lead diverse school communities. The higher mean score with the people who did not take any PL, but believe their skills to be effective with diverse school communities, presents an opportunity for future research to examine the experiences and skills school administrators believe they have to be effective with diverse school communities. An additional question to explore is whether participants who complete an awareness professional learning experience a decrease in their efficacy after gaining a deeper understanding of the cross-cultural experiences and systemic barriers in schools.

Table 14

Comparison of Means Between Participation in CPPL and Skills (*N*=112)

	n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
None	16	4.44	.63	3	5
Awareness	63	4.25	.71	2	5
Application	25	4.32	.85	3	5
Facilitation	8	4.63	.52	4	5

Note. None= No participation in CPPL.

A secondary analysis comparing the mean scores between the racial groups confirmed differences between White participants and African American and additional races. While the participants identifying as African American and Additional races garnered higher mean scores and a lower standard deviation in the non-participation, Awareness, and Application, in the last level of PL, Facilitation, more participants identifying as White took this level of PL and gave the highest rating for their efficacy. The data, summarized in Table 15 shows statistical significance $t(105)=.27$, $p=.01$ between the race of the school administrators and their beliefs about their skills to lead diverse school communities. While the participants who identify as White strongly agree their self-efficacy increases with higher levels of professional learning, the number of people taking Facilitation, only 4 participants in comparison with 47 participants

completing a level one experience. Further exploration into the experiences of the participants in the session would yield insight into why the participants believe their skills increase.

Table 15

Comparison of Means Between Levels of Participation in PL, Races, and Efficacy to Lead Diverse School Communities (N=112)

CPPL	African American		Additional Races*		White	
	n	M (SD)	*n*	M (SD)	*n*	M (SD)
No CPPL	8	4.75(.46)	-		8	4.44 (.64)
Awareness	13	4.31(.48)	3	4.33(.58)	47	4.23 (.79)
Application	10	4.40 (.70)	1	5.00	14	4.21 (.98)
Facilitation	3	4.33 (.58)	1	4.00	4	5.00

Note. Additional Races is comprised of three Asian American, one person of two or more races and one person identifying as Hispanic

Cultural Proficiency Professional Learning and Essential Elements. A deductive approach was used to analyze the data for RQ5: What are the participants' perceptions of their past participation in the in-service cultural proficiency seminars in supporting their skills with the EEs aligned to equity, cultural competence and/or social justice? The survey provided nine possible responses aligned to one of the three themes: equity, cultural competence, or social justice. Each theme had three choices of corresponding responses aligned with the essential elements (EEs) of cultural proficiency. The responses were based on phrases used in literature describing the three concepts of cultural competence, equity, and social justice with the essential elements of cultural proficiency. The responses for this question were printed out and the number of times each item was selected was counted. The frequencies of how many participants selected equity, which aspects of equity and are displayed in Table 16. Table 17 shows the frequencies

and items selected for cultural competence. Lastly, Table 18 displays the frequencies and items for social justice. The responses to the questions were quantified by taking qualitative data and transforming it into quantitative data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The results are displayed below.

Table 16

Frequency of Participants Who Attended CPPL Perceived the Training Enhanced Skills in Equity (*n*=96)

Equity*	# of Participants selecting items
Create equitable school environments that are safe and secure for students.	75
Ensure high expectations for all students	72
Ensure all students get what they need when they need it for success	56

Note. *Definitions for equity are paraphrased from the Councils of Chief State School Officers Leading for Equity: Opportunities for State Educational Chiefs Guide (2017). Participants were given the option to check as many that applied in each category.

Table 17

Frequency of Participants Who Attended the CPPL Perceived the Training Enhanced Skills in Cultural Competence (*n*=96)

Cultural Competence	# of Participants selecting items
Awareness of my own assumptions biases and beliefs	88
Engaging in difficult dialogue about meeting the needs of all students	88
Valuing diversity and working towards inclusiveness	71

Note. Participants were given the option to check as many that applied in each category.

Table 18

Frequency of Participants Who Attended the CPPLPerceived the Training Enhanced skills in Social Justice (*n*=96)

Social Justice	# of Participants selecting items
Understand systemic privilege and oppression	51
Create a shared vision for all students benefiting academically	45
Advocate for students who have been historically marginalized	54

Note. Participants were given the option to check as many that applied in each category.

The results of the analysis of the EEs with the perceptions of the CPPL shows variations across the three factors in the study. The three items in each of the subscales for cultural competence, equity, and social justice were calculated into an average and the scores were compared. The results are from the participants attending a CPPL (*n*=96). First, 82% perceived cultural competence was most aligned with the CPPL. Second, equity, rendered a rating of 67% in alignment with the CPPL. Lastly, the respondents scored social justice at 50% alignment. Further examination of items in the subscales surfaced differences between the three factors with skill enhancement from the CPPL. Two items in cultural competence, *Awareness of my own assumptions biases and beliefs*, and *Engaging in difficult dialogue about meeting the needs of all students* were selected by 92% the respondents. In the equity subscale, the item, *Ensure students get what they need when they need it for success* was selected by 58%. This item a national document written by state superintendents and was not language used in the Mid-Atlantic district. The last factor, social justice was reported as the lowest by the school administrators in

the CPPL enhancing skills in the subscales. While most of the items in the scale scored above 50%, one item, in the factor for social justice *Create a shared vision for all students benefitting academically,* was only selected by 47% of the participants. These findings indicate the CPPL helped to increase self-awareness and the motivation for cultural competence and diversity, but participation in the seminars may not have increased efficacy to take actions that are aligned with social justice.

Values Leader Perceive Important to Leading Diverse Schools. The final question in the needs assessment, RQ6- What values do school administrators perceive as important to leading diverse school communities? A further exploration investigated the alignment of the values with the EE of cultural proficiency, through a collection of qualitative data. Following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2013) two-cycle coding method, the responses were printed out and the responses were analyzed for repetition of words, similarity with phrases, and terms which could align with the EE of cultural proficiency. In the first cycle coding "values coding" (Miles, et al., 2014, p.75) defined as person's values, attitudes or beliefs, were explored. Intensive reviews of the data identified following values: respect, diversity, honesty, equity, empathy, inclusivity, and relationships. The second coding cycle used deductive coding and drew themes from this study's EST and EEs conceptual framework to assess for alignment (Miles, et al., 2014). The themes are from the EEs and consist of: (a) assessing self and systems, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing for differences, (d) adapting for inequities, (e) institutionalizing policies and practices. Next a matrix was created to analyze the EST and EEs of the identified values. The two tables below display the results of the analysis.

Table 19

Codes, Themes, Definitions and Examples from Participants

Code(s) & Definition	Examples	Theme- Essential Elements & Definition	Examples
Personal Value- the importance we attribute to ourselves or another	Diversity Equity Empathy Honesty Inclusivity Relationships Respect	Assessing Self- reflecting on core values you maintain as important to you and your leadership	Honesty Respect Empathy
		Valuing Diversity- naming diversity as important and actively honor diversity as a strength, and increasing inclusivity	Diversity
Attitude- the way we think and feel about oneself or another	"Managing the conflicts that inevitably arise in a group of culturally permeable states."	Managing Dynamics of Differences- learn to manage conflict particularly in cross-cultural situations.	"Managing the conflicts that inevitably arise in a group of culturally permeable states."
	"Building relationships with the school community at large." "Having leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds, school staff that reflect the demographics of the community."	Valuing Diversity- naming diversity as important and actively honor diversity as a strength, and increasing inclusivity	"Building relationships with the school community at large." "Having leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds, school staff that reflect the demographics of the community."
	"Students and parents are empowered to lead with administrators."	Adapting for Diversity- changing current practices to benefit the school community	"Students and parents are empowered to lead with administrators."

	"Clear purpose, strong understanding of 'Why' you are an educator."		
Belief-includes values and beliefs and personal knowledge and experience, opinions	"Belief and hope that all students can and will learn."	Assessing Self-reflecting on core values you maintain as important to you and your leadership	"Belief and hope that all students can and will learn."
	"Moral imperative to provide students with opportunities for success."	Adapting for Diversity-changing current practices to benefit the school community	"Moral imperative to provide students with opportunities for success."
	'We as educators are the instruments for social change."		'We as educators are the instruments for social change."

Note. The themes are from the cultural proficiency essential elements, which is a grounding framework for this study.

The results of the data coding and themes show examples from the participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs have an overlap with four of the five EEs of cultural proficiency. Core values which school administrators identified as important to leading diverse school communities are, diversity, equity, empathy, honesty, inclusivity, relationships, and respect. Those values are reflected in the EEs "assessing oneself," and "valuing diversity." Further analysis of "valuing diversity" identified the quotations "building relationships with schools at large," and "having leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds, school and staff reflect the demographics of the community." The two quotations indicate a shift from internal values of the leader, to culturally proficient leadership practices. Additionally, the quotation "managing the conflicts that inevitably arise in a group of culturally permeable states," exemplifies an attitude and is also an example of the EE, managing differences. The normalization of expecting conflict to arise and then managing conflict, rather than avoiding conflict are culturally proficient

leadership practices (Lindsey et al., 2005). The fourth EE identified in the qualitative analysis is "adapting for diversity." Two quotations "students and parents are empowered to lead with administrators," and "moral imperative to provide students with opportunities for success," speak to the importance for school administrators to change current practices to benefit the school community (Lindsey et al, 2005). The last quotation "we as educators are the instruments for social change," reinforces culturally proficient leadership practices and a call for socially just leaders (Lindsey et al, 2005). The synthesis of the EST and the EE of cultural proficiency are displayed in the Table 19. Additional quotations from the data are included in the matrix to integrate participants' perceptions of values important to leading diverse school communities with the study's theoretical framework.

The integration of the qualitative data with the EST and the EE displayed in Table 20, provides evidence of participants identifying culturally proficient leadership practices across the EST. The microsystem consists of the leader's internal values, experiences, ability to critically self-reflect, and willingness to surface biases which are in four of the five EEs, (a) assessing culture, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing differences, and (d) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The values, "honesty, respect, and empathy," build a foundation for leaders to understand "cultural norms are not seen as disrespect," and to ensure "leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds, school staff that reflect the demographics of the community." The "belief and hope that all students can and will learn" is under institutionalizing cultural knowledge, because a leader who communicates this belief to their staff will continue to support their teachers with becoming culturally responsive to their students. In the mesosystem, the microsystem interactions of student voice and community engagement increases culturally proficient leadership (Khalifa et al., 2016). Four EEs, assessing self and systems, valuing

diversity, managing dynamics of difference, and adapting to diversity, are identified in the mesosystem, however, the EE, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, is not present in the examples. The value, "relationships" is first identified, and "building relationships with the school community at large," is an example of the EE valuing diversity. Managing the dynamics of difference was present in the quotations in such examples as "ability to see the 'gray' areas," and "listening to students, teachers, and parents to understand how their experiences are affecting the way they perceive school." Both quotations are examples of a culturally proficient leaders' ability to look past an absolute right or wrong, but rather the complexity of people's experiences. The macrosystem holds the district expectations and policies in the study's theoretical model, and culturally proficient leadership in this system will involve challenging the barriers. The value identified is "equity" in the EE, assessing self, and then expressed in the EE, adapting to diversity, with the quotes, "flatten hierarchies," "confront inequities," and "students and parents are empowered to lead with administrators." The quotations provide actions to enact equity, which requires leadership actions that are external, meaning changing systems outside of oneself, rather than internal reflections. Lastly, the chronosystem is examined, which is system changes over time. Two EEs are supported with examples, adapting for diversity with "knowing your learners in a deep sense and being aware of their changing needs, throughout the school year, and not just once in a while, and the EE institutionalizing cultural knowledge, "We as educators are the instrument for social change." Both of those quotes speak to the on-going importance of culturally proficient leadership actions overtime and the willingness of school administrators to communicate and voice their expectations to their staff. The deeper investigation of the qualitative data provides further insight into the values, beliefs, and actions school administrators

perceive will support leading diverse school communities. The discussion and summary will merge the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Table 20

Synthesis of Ecological System (EST) with Essential Elements (EE) of Cultural Proficiency

	Assessing Culture (self or systems)	Valuing Diversity	Managing the Dynamics of Difference	Adapting to Diversity	Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge
Microsystem Critical self-reflection, unconscious bias, values and personal experience	Honesty Respect Empathy	"Having leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds, school staff that reflect the demographics of the community."	"Cultural norms are not seen as disrespect."		"Belief and hope that all students can and will learn."
Mesosystem- Increasing student voice and community engagement	Relationships	"Building relationships with the school community at large."	"Managing the conflicts that inevitably arise in a group of culturally permeable states." "Ability to see the 'gray' areas. "Listening to students, teachers, and parents to understand how their experiences are affecting the way they perceive issues at school."	"Knowing your learners in a deep sense and being aware of their changing needs."	

Macrosystem-Challenging barriers	Equity	"Flatten Hierarchies" "Confront Inequities"	
Exosystem-Changing systems for inclusion. Institutionalizing practices, policies, and priorities	Inclusivity	"Students and parents are empowered to lead with administrators." "Having leaders who are from diverse cultural backgrounds, school staff that reflect the demographic of the community."	
Chronosystem-Assess and reflect on changes in educational system and societal context over time		"Knowing your learners in a deep sense and being aware of their changing needs, throughout the school year, not just once in a while."	'We as educators are the instruments for social change."

Discussion and Summary

Over half of the participants 63% (*n*=70) did not have any leadership preparation in research identified topics of equity, cultural competence, or social justice, yet the qualitative findings supported that the participants held values and beliefs aligned with cultural competence and equity. The statistical findings for the participants' belief about their preparation in the leading diverse school communities showed a low correlational relationship between the participants' perceptions of those courses and preparing them to lead diverse school communities, and no correlation between the courses and the skills to lead diverse school communities. However, with only 7% (*n*=8) of the participants taking courses on all three topics, the importance of professional learning warrants more investigation. The qualitative analysis presented the following values leaders perceive as important to leading diverse school communities: diversity, equity, empathy, honesty, inclusivity, relationships, and respect. It is unclear if the participants believe they were taught these values from courses in other subject areas, if they identified these values over time, or if they believe these values were identified prior to them becoming school leaders. Future research can investigate the content of the topics taught in leadership preparation with current aspiring school administrators to assess what school administrators perceive prepares them to lead diverse school communities.

The next set of research questions explored the CPPL offered by the district, and the results did not show statistical significance with school leaders' beliefs in the professional learning increasing their skills in leading diverse school communities. So, while the quantitative analysis did not support statistical significance, the qualitative analysis showed perceptions of the outcomes of the CPPL did align the EEs with cultural competency, equity, or social justice. The results of the qualitative analysis after quantizing the selection of items in the three areas,

indicate the participants perceive the CPPL to most align with cultural competence and enhance their skills with awareness of assumptions of biases and beliefs and engaging in difficult dialogue about meeting the needs of all students. Two items in equity, creating equitable schools and ensuring high expectations, were skills that a majority of the respondents perceived an enhancement of skills after taking the seminars, while the item from the national definition, was only identified by 56 people. The definitions from a national document instead of the Mid-Atlantic's current definition of equity, is a consideration when researching alignment within the district. Lastly, the items for social justice were reported less than then items in the factors for equity and cultural competence. The qualitative data only identified one quotation, "we as educators are the instruments for social change," which spoke to culturally proficient educators' role in social change, but not any deeper understanding within the EE aligned with social justice. Based on the quantitative data and the quantitative data, the topic of social justice offers an opportunity to create an intervention which will focus on explicitly focusing on the EE aligned with social justice.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the needs assessment study is the use of a new instrument that was not validated beyond this study and thus has not been tested enough to ascertain if it is a strong measure. Second, internal validity, with the participants' (n= 112) recall of the courses they took during their leadership preparation can range from 20+ year to less than five years ago. The actual content of the courses is reliant on the participants' memory from decades ago, and thus may not be accurate. The lack of availability of courses in cultural competence, equity, and social justice is more a reflection of the exosystem and what courses the universities believed were important to leadership preparation, rather than the microsystem of the individual deciding

what courses to take in their leadership preparation. Lastly, external validity, may have been affected contextually during the time of the needs assessment. A new superintendent and emphasis on equity in districtwide administrative meetings with school administrators focused presentations specifically on equity, which may have affected the outcomes of the study.

Summary of Chapter 2 and Rationale for Intervention

School leadership is an important factor in the creation of inclusive and equitable schools (Brown et al., 2006; Marshall, 2004). However, schools with a majority White school administrators and teachers leading school communities with an ethnic minority majority student population maybe inadvertently contributing to the opportunity gap for Black and Latinx students (Riehl, 2000; Theoharis, 2010). Leaders who were not offered the opportunity to critically examine their own biases, privilege, and beliefs (Bustamante et al., 2009) and understand the systems of oppression currently infused in educational systems, (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), may continue to uphold practices that are maintaining the status quo (Shields, 2010), which only continues the opportunity gap among racialized students.

Leadership preparation programs can support preservice leaders to lead diverse schools by offering courses in equity, cultural competence, and social justice. The literature review in Chapter One revealed only a few leadership preparations courses devote the time for preservice leaders to engage in the critical reflection, and self-awareness needed for transformative learning to take place (Barakat et al., 2018; Brown, 2006; Bustamante et al., 2009; Miller & Martin, 2015). This finding appears to be upheld in the district under investigation. The examination of more than thirty-six articles revealed the following gaps in leadership preparation: (a) lack of understanding about equity and a need for leaders to take actions to lead for equity, (b) a need to

practice critical reflection and increase self-awareness, (c) a lack of understanding in how to enact social justice and (d) a need to ways to sustain actions related to equity over time.

The current professional learning offered to school administrators addresses self-awareness and critical self-reflection more than other components identified by research as important for leading diverse school communities. According to Bustamante et al., (2009), the findings from his research recommended deeper awareness. Participants in this study perceived there were able to be become more aware of their assumptions, biases, and beliefs in the professional learnings through critical self-reflection (Collay, 2014; Guerra et al., 2013; Santamaria, 2014). The DeMatthews' (2015) case study indicated school administrators could be resistant to addressing social justice issues with teachers, due resistance from the teachers. The DeMatthews' (2015) study reported repercussions against a principal from the district resulting in a forced resignation. However, it is unclear in the needs assessment from this study why the indicators of social justice were not reported more by the participants in this study. Additionally, Bustamante et al., 2014 suggests a holistic examination of schoolwide practices would be relevant to culturally competent leadership, and is one that is explored further in the intervention literature. The next section will draw upon findings from the needs assessment to further build the foundation for this study's intervention.

Chapter Three-Intervention Literature Review

Summary of Needs Assessment

The needs assessment explored school leaders' preservice leadership preparation in coursework on the topics of equity, cultural competence and social justice. Additionally, data were collected on the types of professional development principals or assistant principals perceived as important to leading diverse school communities. The results of the needs assessment supported continuing with the current factors being investigated in the study, but focusing the intervention to needs identified in the survey.

The findings from the needs assessment suggest a potential knowledge gap with school leaders on the topics of equity, cultural competence, and social justice**.** The needs assessment surfaces the findings that participants neither perceived that they received background on the skills needed to lead diverse schools during their principal preparation program nor found that the current professional learning from the district supported their development. The intervention literature discussed in this chapter will examine leadership skills to address equity, social justice, as well as increasing one's cultural competence.

The needs assessment brought to light relevant information regarding school administrators' preservice leadership preparation, and the values they perceive as supporting their ability to lead diverse school communities. Based on the finding in the needs assessment, further investigation is appropriate to focus first on leaders' self-reflecting on their values, beliefs, biases, and practices for cultural competence. To support this next step, the intervention literature examines identity, critical self-reflection, deficit thinking, and investigating transformational and transformative leadership. As the conceptual framework in Chapter 1 proposed, this study examines if those actions support leaders' culturally proficient practices.

In the next section the theoretical framework guiding this study, ecological systems theory (EST) with the cultural proficiency essential elements (EEs) lays the groundwork for the intervention literature. Theoretical frameworks build a foundation to construct the blueprint for the intervention (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Chapter One built the theoretical foundation for this study with five systems of EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. In chapter three, the focus for the intervention will narrow to the microsystem and mesosystem. The focus in those two systems will support skill development for equity, cultural competence, and social justice, which this study argues leads to culturally proficient leadership practices.

Theoretical Framework-Interventions Affecting the Microsystem and Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory (EST) is the foundation for this study. A key change for this study is replacing "the child" used in the original theory in the center of the nested model with the school leader in the core. Wielkiewicz and Stelzner (2005) researchers in leadership, assert organizations are more akin to an ecological model, or a fluid paradigm, rather than an industrial top-down linear paradigm; thus, leaders experience tensions between the systems, making leadership itself is an emergent process.

The emergent process starts with the school leader in the center of the model, the microsystem. This includes the leaders' values, biases, beliefs, personal and professional experiences. In this layer, it is important for the leader to assess themselves and their environment. Berkovich (2014) connects EST with a socio-ecological framework for social justice leadership. He contends the activism required by social justice educational leaders is derived from social justice values of the school leader, which are equity, inclusion, and taking actions to promote equitable change for marginalized students (Berkovich, 2014). The literature

review in this chapter will synthesize intervention research that supports an emergent process (Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005) for leaders and "inside out" (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, pg. 3) thus supporting culturally proficient leadership practices and leadership actions that will support equity, (Kose, 2009) and social justice (Shields, 2010).

The mesosystem examines how the leader influences or develops in relation to the components in this layer of the socio-ecological system (Berkovich, 2014). A leader adapts in an organization and progresses as an emergent leader (Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005), however a transformative leader critically examines themselves and the organization in order to work with other stakeholders to transform the environment for "deep and equitable change" (Shields, 2010 p. 562). The goal with transformative leadership is for individual, organizational, and societal transformation (Shields, 2010), and as such, a culturally proficient leader works with equity teams to make changes in the environment and adapt practices and policies for equity.

The EEs of cultural proficiency is used with EST to examine interventions in the EST and will be referred to as a blended EST/EEs model, depicted in Figure 2. The EST/EEs microsystem will focus on the supporting the leader in surfacing their values, beliefs, biases, an exploration with their own identity development and how this affects their leadership (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009; Sue & Sue, 2012), and components of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Shields, 2010). The next layer of the EST/EEs consists of three of the EEs, valuing diversity, managing the differences for equity, and adapting practices for equity and inclusion. Equity and social justice are two factors addressed in this layer. Figure 3 offers a visual representation of the EST/EEs with the microsystem and mesosystem.

Figure 3. The Microsystem and Mesosystem for the Intervention.

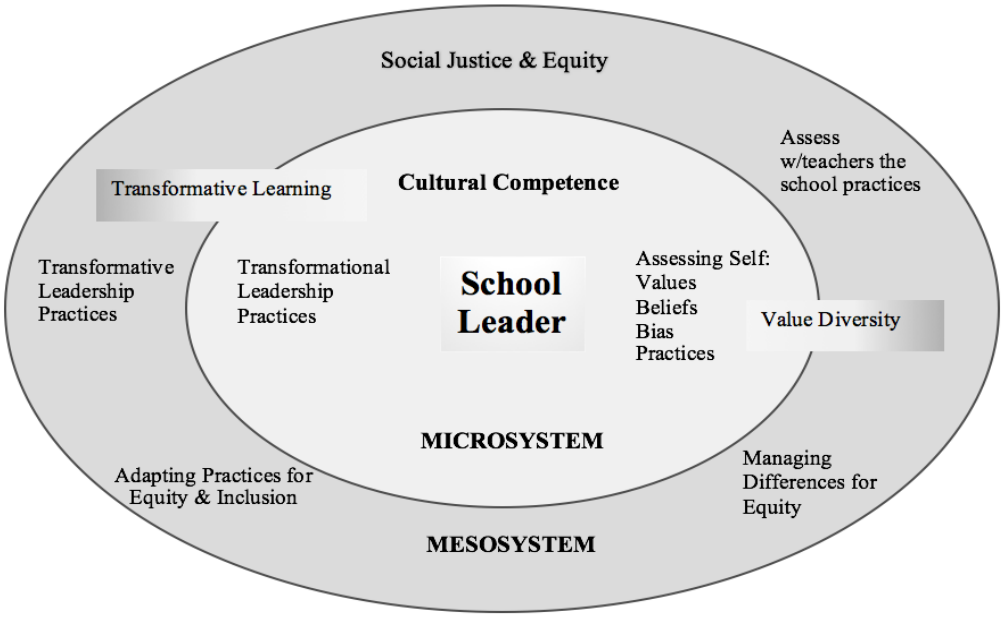


Figure X. This illustrates two layers of Bronfenbrenner EST (1979) model examined with interventions for this study with the EEs of the cultural proficiency framework (Cross et al. 1989). The leadership theories identified in this study are transformational and transformative (Burns, 1978; Shields, 2010) Transformative learning is the process through which a leader engages in practices for transformative leadership for equity (Mezirow, 1978; Astin & Astin, 2000).

The EST/EEs examines four of the five EE in cultural proficiency (Cross, et al., 1989) in the intervention literature review: (a) assessing self (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing differences for equity, (d) adapting practices for equity and inclusion. The intervention literature review is laid out in the following manner, first, the essential element, assessing self, is explored through interventions focused on the leaders' exploration of racial and cultural identity and self-reflections to understand how it may influence their leadership. Second, challenging deficit thinking with equity teams. Third, interventions to understand transformative leadership and transformative learning to support leaders adapting their practices for equity and inclusion are explored. Lastly, professional learning to gain a deeper understanding of social justice is

investigated through games, simulations, and media focused on systemic opportunities for students marginalized and barriers are considered.

Intervention Literature Review

Interventions Aligned with the Essential Elements

Assessing Self- Racial identity and critical self-reflection. It is important for school leaders to critically reflect on their racial identity and how this affects their leadership. A study conducted by Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) explored leadership preparation programs that addressed issues of power, race, systems of oppression, and individual bias through the use of racial autobiographies. The study provided evidence that racial autobiographies increased the student's "racial awareness and movement away from colorblindness" (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015, p. 225). A convenience sample of aspiring leaders (n=12) participated in the study. The researchers examined journal entries from the participants to collect data on the participants' awareness about race. The participants were: White (n=8), biracial (White-Latino) (n=2), and Black (n=2) (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015), and the researchers used either the Helms' Model of White identity development (1990), or Cross's (1991) Black Identity development model to inform the findings. This study informs the intervention for supporting leaders toward culturally proficient practices, because it provides an evidence-informed way for current leaders to assess their racial identity development, privilege, and internalized messages about race, power, and racial consciousness (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). The study concluded the "process of reflecting and writing about race is itself a substantial action" (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015, p. 250).

Examining one's racial identity and the privilege and power ascribed to a person because of their racial identity is also relevant as school leaders made sense of race and demographic

changes in their schools. A qualitative study conducted by Evans (2007) with three suburban high schools and collected data from a minimum of eight faculty and staff in each school. The data included 90-minute interviews, archival data, school-related documents and examination of the schools' programs, policies and practices. The researcher sought to understand how school leaders made sense of the issues arising from race and demographic changes in the school. The schools selected had an increase in African American students in a time span of a decade (1990-2000) which resulted in the demographics of the African American student population growing to 50%-54% of the student body. Three of the key interviews highlighted in the study supported the need for school leaders to have critical awareness of not only their racial identity, but also the impact of their power in the educational setting. One interview with a White, male, assistant superintendent, who colleagues described as a "good ole boy" (Evans, 2007; p. 171), revealed he professed colorblind views, but harbored deficit views about African American educators and students. He stated the change in African American students was only "1 to 2 percent a year" (p. 171), yet the data showed the percentage of African American students rose from 6% to 50%. That same assistant superintendent only employed 2 and 6 African American employees, claiming "quality minority teachers are few and far between" (p. 172). Another interview with a White, male principal, described how he relied on his African American assistant principal to do the outreach with the African American families, but didn't go to the meetings himself. Additionally, that same principal expressed the "Black students, especially males, need male role models. They need that mentoring more than Caucasian students do," (p.176), which is an example of deficit thinking (Valencia 1977). Lastly, an interview with an African American, female principal surfaced her perspectives aligned with critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), which was based on her lived experience as an African American woman. Her

approach was to teach the middle-class values to the African American families as a means to assimilate, which also pathologizes the families and students (Shields, 2010). The need for school administrators to understand their racial identity development and the location in the larger sociopolitical and professional context is supported by the Evan's (2007) study and relevant to the intervention for this study.

Case studies offer a means to gain deep, rich data from people participating in the investigation by illuminating more vivid revelations from an individual (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). A case study conducted by Dillard (1995), argued a lack of perspectives on school administration from African American and additional leaders of color warranted an in-depth exploration into their experiences. The principal selected for the study was chosen because she was well-respected by her peers and one of the few African American principals leading a high school in the district which the study takes place. Data were collected from the researcher shadowing the principal two days a month. Data collection included 70 hours of informal interviews with the principal, about 40 hours of interviews with staff, and 20 hours of interviews with students. Finally, classroom observations were conducted with the principal for an additional eight hours of data collection. The researcher herself identifies as an African American woman, and sought to challenge underlying beliefs about effective leadership using feminist critique. As a result, the findings reconceptualize and reinterpret what effective school administration is in racially diverse schools. The first finding is "effective leadership actions are grounded in subjective interpretations and understanding that arise from the leaders' own personal biographies situated within collective histories of their cultural groups" (Dillard, 1995; p. 558). To put the findings into other words, it is important for leaders to take the time to explore their own personal experiences and how this affects their leadership. The researcher also

contends that understanding the collective history of the cultural group was especially significant for leaders from minoritized racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. Second, effective leadership in diverse schools demonstrate care, concern, and advocacy for individual student needs, which also includes meaningful interaction with the students and family in a culturally respectful manner. Lastly, the final tenet proposed from the findings is that effective leadership is transformative political work meaning changing the structures and policies that have unfairly produced inequitable outcomes for minoritized students has to be addressed.

The process of critical self-reflection is valuable when leaders participate in an on-going learning opportunity. Another study using the case study methodology was conducted by Collay (2014) and examined an American Latina teacher in a two-masters program for teacher leadership. Participants in this program developed their leadership skills for teacher leadership positions, and chose to remain in the classroom rather than school administrator positions. This case was selected from a larger data set of more than 50 sets of critical reflections from three students in the master's program. This focus of leadership identity development in the Collay (2014) study is relevant to themes in this dissertation. Participants in the Collay (2014) study were given five critical reflections to submit over the two years of the program. The reflections were collected and each quarter. The themes for the critical self-reflections are as follows: (a) self-reflection on one's own schooling, (b) equity plan, an action research project using achievement data, (c) self-assessment of one's leadership development, (d) gatekeeping inquiry, exploration of civil rights concern, development of materials for the community and reflecting on taking the materials to the community, and (e) reflection on the year-long inquiry and leadership vision statement. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the reflections were voice, knowledge, and advocacy. In reflecting on her experiences as a child, the person in the case

study wrote how her voice was minimized because she had been a non-English speaking child in school, she recognized how she minimized her voice in the master's program because of feeling intimidated by the professors and other students. As she gained more knowledge and increased her understanding and awareness of language discrimination, her voice increased both in the program and in the school. She became a more confident, and stronger leader for English language learners in her school. Creating an equity plan gave her a direction to work on issues she had developed her skills on and felt more confident in her leadership. The reflections were critical for her transformative learning and leadership. Prompts from the study, such as "How did your experience in school shape your own beliefs about teaching and learning?" and "How did that experience or other experiences influence your decision to become a leader for equity" (Collay, 2014; p. 786) will be considered for use in this dissertation study. While this comprehensive case study offers insight into the transformations of a participant in a leadership program, the participant was not in a formal leadership position. The reflections were the participants self-reports of her leadership actions. Additional data, such as interviews with the participant's students, or community, would have provided additional data about her self-reports and thus added greater truth value to the findings (Guba, 1981). While this case study was with a person of color, the leadership development for equity for White administrators is also an important area to study, as the data show more school administrators are White than of a minoritized identity (Taie & Goldring, 2017).

Self-reflection can take on many forms and offering options to engage sensory experiences supports educators in critically reflecting on topics of race or racism. Boske (2015) argues a sensory curriculum for leaders will not only engage the school leaders in critical self-reflection, but will also offer them an opportunity to "reconceptualize themselves and relation of

self to others in an effort to make systemic changes," (p. 123). Boske's (2015) study used a narrative inquiry approach with 98 participants, including 11 principals and six assistant principals, and the racial identities are as follows: White (*n*=51), and Black (*n*=22), Middle Eastern (n=10), Latinx (*n*=8), East Asian (*n*=5), South Asian (*n*=1), and biracial (*n*=1). The participants submitted audio, written, and video entries to their reflection, autobiography, and art-making as a means to examine how they understood racism through the senses. Engaging in a video, audio, writing reflections and the responding to reflective questions were reported by the participants as a new way to restructure themselves and how they can respond to racism. While the race of the participant did surface differences with personal experiences of racism, the study did support increased critical consciousness of all participants. Because all the participants were a part of a leadership preparation program, the researchers in the study did have a high level of compliance with participants willing to submit their reflections through digital or audio mediums. This form of reflection is not common in many professional learning settings and is a consideration with constructing the intervention for this study.

In the EST theoretical model for this study, it is important for the school leader to have a critical and reflective examination of themselves and how their identity influences their leadership. Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) and Boske (2015) suggest engaging in critical self-reflection through questions about their leadership and questions on race and racism. The reflection can also be completed through a racial or cultural autobiography (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009) which offers the opportunity for school leaders to examine themselves and contextualize their racial and cultural identities in the larger societal sphere. While self-reflection is critical for current school administrators, it also important to take additional actions to develop the leadership skills needed to create equity. Prompts to examine

one's leadership and taking action for equity moves a leader from examinations to action (Collay, 2014). Given the different mediums used in the previous studies, school administrators will be offered options to write, audio record, or video record their biographies.

Perceptions of racial background and culturally proficient leadership. In order to assess teacher perspectives of school leadership in the EEs of cultural proficiency, Hines and Kritsonis, (2008) conducted a study using a 35- item instrument with teachers (*N*=112) randomly selected from nine school districts with diverse teaching populations, (37% (*n*=41) taught in high schools, 28% (*n*=32) in middle schools and the remaining 45% (*n*=50) in elementary schools. The racial and ethnic population of the teachers is as follows: White 30% (*n*=34), Black 25% (*n*=28), and Latinx 45% (*n*= 50). This study investigated whether differences emerged in the perceptions of teachers with different racial backgrounds from their White principals. The research was grounded in the homophily theory, or the belief there is greater acceptance, or credibility with people who are from the same cultural background (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008).

The instrument, a 35-item Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale, was originally created by Lindsey, Nuri-Robbins, & Terrell (2003), and used in Smith (2004) to measure principals' self–assessment of their practices in the EEs of cultural proficiency. Hines and Kritsonis (2008) modified the instrument and presented the instrument to a panel of professors who taught cultural proficiency and then offered recommendations for improvement. The pilot offered an overall .74 Cronbach's Alpha, thus having an acceptable internal consistency for the instrument. A MANOVA was conducted and the study's findings established statistically significant differences in African American, White, and Latinx teachers on valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, inclusiveness, assessing the culture, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resources subscales of the survey F (3, 109) =10.82,

$p<.05$. The study asserts the White teachers gave higher ratings to the White principals, but the teachers identifying as Black and Latinx were not as likely to give the White principals high culturally proficient ratings.

Hines and Kritsonis (2008) contend this aligns with previous research stating race does impact the teacher's perceptions of the principals. One implication is the need for school leaders who want to enact culturally proficient practices, to have honest conversations about their definitions of culturally proficient leadership and to engage in dialogue with teachers about how practices such as *valuing diversity*, and *adapting practices for inclusiveness*, can be enacted. The authors of the study, Hines and Kritsonis (2008) argue the teachers themselves should talk with their White principals about their perceptions and observations, while this approach is ideal, if the school administrator is not open to this feedback, then teachers might be hesitant to approach a school administrator. Additionally, if school leaders ascribe to the characteristics of transformational leadership, then it should be incumbent on the leaders to be more explicit in stating their values and take actions to be a role model (Tonkin, 2013).

A weakness of the Hine and Kritsonis (2008) study was not engaging the leader in their own reflection on their racial identity and leadership to increase cultural competence. The Pernell-Arnold and Finley's (2012) study, described earlier in the section on transformative learning, also measured the changes in the self-reported cultural competence of the participants (N=98). Cultural competence in the Pernell-Arnold and Finley (2012) is defined by Sue and Sue's (2003) foundation for cultural competency: (a) actively engaging in surfacing assumptions, biases, beliefs, and values, (b) seeking to understand worldviews different from one's own and (c) engaging in the process of practicing culturally relevant intervention strategies. The definition in the Sue and Sue study (2003) does cross-over with the cultural proficiency framework (Cross

et al., 1989). In the cultural proficiency framework, leaders surface their assumptions, biases and beliefs, in order to assessing their own cultural knowledge which includes racialized identity and additional cultural identifies, this practice is an EEs. A leader who seeks to understand and actively seeks different perspectives is valuing diversity (the second EE), which is another way to understand worldviews different from one's own. Lastly, a school leader who engages in practicing and implementing culturally relevant intervention strategies is adapting to differences, which is the third EE. Three of the EEs of cultural proficiency (Cross et al., 1989), assessing self, valuing diversity, and adapting to differences are evident in Pernell-Arnold and Finley's (2012) study and the Hines and Kritsonis (2008) study used a scale measuring culturally proficient leadership practices, so both studies offer relevant findings and measures for this intervention.

Managing differences for equity-mitigating deficit thinking. Deficit thinking is one of the equity traps identified in the McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) qualitative study using in-depth interviews with eight seasoned White teachers. Valencia (2010) defines deficit thinking as "blaming the students for internal deficiencies, such as limited cognitive abilities, linguistic limitation, or lack of motivation, rather than looking at the systemic barriers that contribute to the schools failing the students resulting in opportunity and test-performance gaps." (p. 6). Using language from the cultural proficiency continuum, one of the four tools of cultural proficiency (Cross et al., 1989), deficit thinking is a *culturally incapacitating* way to view students and one in which educators believe they have cultural superiority over the student (Cross et al., 1989; Lindsey, et al., 2005). Challenging deficit thinking is critical to attaining equity in schools, and culturally proficient school leaders strive to exhibit this practice. When leaders take actions to challenge and mitigate deficit thinking, they are in essence making one of the EEs of cultural

proficiency actionable by managing the differences of the perceptions with their staff. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) identified four strategies to mitigate deficit thinking (a) neighborhood walks to build relationships with teachers, families, and leaders, (b) oral histories that students gather from people in their community (c) three-way conferences with the student, teacher, and family member/guardian, and (d) creating an equity team with teacher leaders. The strategy, equity teams is an intervention school administrators could use to adapt practices in the school and mitigate deficit thinking with educators.

Principals who take intentional actions to lead school teams toward equitable practices and inclusive school environments are more likely to see teachers support social justice efforts (Kose, 2009). A study analyzing the principal's role in promoting cultural competence, equity, and social justice, found principal-directed professional learning with teacher groups was a productive means to explore and implement socially just practices for teaching and learning (Kose, 2009). The in-depth five-month qualitative multi-case study, involved three schools with racially diverse school communities, three White female principals, were selected for this study from a list of 22 interested participants. The principals were selected after a prescreening interview and ratings from candidates with identification criteria. The study identifies the importance of principals creating learning opportunities for teacher leaders to examine data to identify systemic inequity, discuss how to restructure current classrooms to be more inclusive, and for principals to model how they explored their own racial identity development (Kose, 2009). It should be noted, the leadership in all three schools were led by White female principals and the teaching staff in all three schools were predominantly White, while the student population was about 16% to 41% students of color in the three schools. Additionally, the school with 16% students of color increased from 2% to 10% in the ten years prior to the study.

The team was created with input from teachers and also considers the ability of the team to lead, influence their peers, and commit to meet regularly. Kose has promoted the role of principals to also be a provider of the professional development to the staff for topics related to equity and social justice (Kose, 2007, 2009). The recommendation for principals to lead professional learning may solidify the commitment and vision of the principal to these topics. However, the reality in many school districts, principals are expected to lead school reform addressing several systemic goals, thus it is crucial for systemic leaders to set the direction and prioritize equity both at the system-wide level and expect their principals to prioritize equity in their schools (Tallerica 2014). Supporting principals in developing the equity teams with teacher leader input and building the principals' skills in leading the examination of data to discuss equity with teacher leaders is a relevant component for the intervention in this study.

It is important for principals to establish equity teams and engage in discussions exploring practices promoting equity as well as barriers to equity (Kose, 2009, McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). While leadership is a factor, it might not be as critical for principals to lead the professional development for equity because the principals will be developing teacher leaders and peer leaders by having them engaging in similar professional learning as the principals (Szpara, 2017). The professional development designed for principals should offer a deep understanding about equity and which leadership styles may motivate or promote actions for equity. The next section will investigate transformative leadership as an intervention to support how school administrators can lead equity teams.

Adapting practices through transformative and transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership. Leadership approaches are an important factor when examining education. Transformational leadership, an approach first studied in the business

sector has been elevated in the field of education for school administrators when leading school reform and change (Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2015; Onorato, 2016). Bass and Avolio (1994) defined the four components of transformational leadership as: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized support. A three-year case study conducted by Brezicha et al., (2015) in an elementary school with data collected from interviews and observations with the principals and teachers on how principals can support teachers with implementing change initiatives. The study examined the teachers' sense-making and leadership practices that supported the change initiative. The study's conceptual framework included both transformational leadership and distributive leadership. While the three-year study included data from observations in six groups engaging in the change and in-depth interviews with three of teachers teaching and implementing social and civic skills. The data for the study only included the findings on the relationship between the principal's support with three teachers over the three years in the change initiative. The researchers conducted seven interviews with the principal over the three-years and observed her in staff meetings, professional development sessions and in interactions with student and teachers. The data collected from the teachers includes both individual and group interviews ranging from 45-90 minutes and classroom observations. The findings from the qualitative study uplift the importance of differentiating aspects of the leader based on the teacher's experience, views, and philosophy when trying to enact change. Additionally, the study confirmed the four identified elements of transformational leadership Brezicha et al., (2015) and reported an additional two elements pertinent to school settings: (a) building a vision and (b) facilitating teacher networks. The study's findings concluded, it was important for the principal to connect her vision for the new change initiative in order for the teachers to understand why they were teaching and implementing social and civic

skills. The teacher networks were important avenues for the teachers to learn from one another and develop their ability to implement the curriculum and increase sense of community in their classroom. With that end, an administrator who builds a vision to enact change for a more inclusive school will need to connect the vision with the teacher and their daily practice to more likely support the teachers' collective efficacy.

Transformational school leadership practices contribute in varying degrees to student achievement. An earlier meta-analysis on transformational school leadership conducted by Sun and Leithwood (2012) who gathered evidence from 79 unpublished theses or dissertation investigating transformational school leadership over a 14-year time period. Their argument for choosing unpublished theses or dissertations was to address four issues in previous research on transformational school leadership. First was to minimize publication bias in which studies with significant findings are more likely to be published but studies replicating previous research showing significant results are often not published. Second, the inclusion of dissertations, in which the dissertation committees will have more stringent expectation in the design of the research than some studies with poorly designed studies published in low quality journals. The third reason builds on the sources of knowledge from the value of unpublished dissertations, and presentations at conferences. Lastly, inclusion of studies from different countries, schools in rural, urban, and suburban districts and variation in elementary, middle and high schools offers a broader perspective on transformational school leadership. With the inclusion of these additional studies, the authors challenged researchers to consider the following findings: (a) organizational context of the leader, meaning are some school leaders more successful with transformational strategies if the organizational goals are aligned to support the leader, (b) interdependence among the transformational leadership practices and thus analysis on singular traits maybe difficult to

extricated, and (c) building collaborate structures $r = .17$ showed greater contribution to student achievement than developing a shared vision and building goal consensus $r = .03$. While the last finding may seem to contradict the findings from Brezicha et al., (2015), it is important to explore how building collaborative structures, or the term used in the Brezicha et al., (2015) study, facilitating "teacher social networks" (p. 120), contributes more than developing a share vision building goal consensus. In the context of collective efficacy for teachers, the goal consensus might not be a critical as the shared vision for an inclusive school. Bass and Steidmeier (1999) states that transformational leaders inspire their followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the organization. This aspect of transformational leadership can help to uplift organizational goals for equity and social justice. The teacher networks will also develop the professional and safe spaces for teachers to surface their values and beliefs, increase their knowledge and skills, so they themselves can support one another's professional growth. By building on transformational leadership qualities, school administrators help to co-create inclusive school environments with their staff, students, and community (Brezicha et al., 2015; Onorato, 2016).

Transformative Leadership. Transformative leadership practices that critique and work to change district policies which unjustly target or harm some students, such as gender-based or dress code policies, are more aligned with a social justice leadership approach (Shields, 2010). The key difference between transformative leadership and transformational leadership is transformative leaders engage in advocacy by critiquing and changing practice, whereas transformational leaders focus on running an effective organization by actualize the school system goals and mission (Shields, 2010). The social justice lens of a transformative leader, examines the inequities within institutions that exclude minoritized students, such as scheduling

testing or sporting events on non-Christian religious holidays, and challenges the policies and practices benefiting students from non minoritized backgrounds (Berkovich, 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2009). The assumption is for transformative leaders to institutionalize practices and continuously seek and disseminate cultural knowledge to benefit all students.

Educational leaders who want to effect changes in both education and in the broader society called for a paradigm shift. Heeding the call for a theory for transformative leadership, Shields (2010) back-mapped research on transformational leadership, and the new paradigm suggested a shift from transformational leadership to transformative leadership (Foster, 1986; Shields, 2010). According to Freire (1998), education is linked with the wider social context, and as such school leaders should work to transform inequities inherent in societies and replicated in schools. Shields (2010) used confirmatory interviews and observations with two principals to identify practices for transformative leadership. The in-depth study conducted by Shields (2010), suggests the acknowledgement of power and privilege is critical to "deconstruct and reconstruct social /cultural frameworks that generate inequity" (p. 563). The researcher states when a leader is able acknowledge the power and privilege, the school leader is more able to address the need for "deep and equitable change" (Shields, 2010; p. 563). Basing the premise of the study on the aforementioned beliefs, she coded actions by the two principals to revealed strategies of a transformative nature. The actions were: (a) redistribution of power to their teachers, (b) instructional approaches that promoted democratic learning, and (c) increasing the educators' awareness of the larger societal concerns and inequities facing students. Shields (2010) argues these actions move the principals away from transformational leadership toward transformative leadership. While the Shields (2010) study offers compelling support for transformative leadership, the study was conducted with only two principals, and as with most

qualitative studies, the findings may not be generalizable. Additionally, the gender of the two principals was explicit with the pseudonyms and pronouns with female names, however the race of either principal was never explicitly shared in the study. This raises the questions whether the researchers themselves were aware of their colorblind approach in sharing the findings of the study, and if the leaders, while professing a need to address racial, gender, and socioeconomics, inequities lacked an awareness of the impact of their own racialized context when enacting transformative actions. Were they able to take a colorblind approach because while both principals spoke of growing up in poverty, their racialized identity further upheld systems of privilege and power for leaders who are White? One principal frequently had her teachers engaging in reflective writing activities in which they had express their assumptions about why student were or were not learning. This dialogue brought about dialogue and awareness of one's assumptions and biases towards students of different races. The principal stated she was "willing to take the heat from the board and district officials if anyone complained" (Shields, 2010; p.578) because the principals believed her actions were important for both the students and teachers, but that shifting away from a colorblind approach might not be aligned with organizational goal of maintaining the status quo among teachers. Because the racial identity of the principals was not explicitly shared, it is unclear whether that factor influences outcomes for the school administrators.

Building on the research from Shields (2010), Liou and Hermanns (2017) investigated a leadership preparation program through a narrative inquiry methodology with the faculty and students of an Arizona University. The inclusion of faculty in this process provided insight into how the faculty lead when implementing change and at time when students of color were experiencing racial hostility. The student participants in the study (N=24) included 22 who

identified as White and two as Black. The number and racial identity of the faculty participants was not shared in the study. However, the study states in its purpose the need for educators to be explicitly antiracist to better serve the student demographics at both the K-12 settings and higher education in Arizona. The researchers were motivated to conduct this study because the educators at the university was predominantly White, while the student population was a majority mix of Latinx, Somali, and Indigenous students. Over the 14-month course the faculty incorporated guiding questions into the syllabus to explicitly guide the students to connect their school work with diverse student contexts. The questions are the following (Liou & Hermanns (2017); p.669):

(a) Structure -What do equitable schools look like?

(b) Culture - How should we conduct ourselves within this context to foster equity and excellence?

(c) Agency -What can we do to further the mission of equity and excellence within the school and beyond?

The findings from Liou and Hermanns' study (2017) confirm faculty teaching aspiring school leaders should explicitly connecting and weaving themes of race, racism, leading to inequitable conditions for students, families, and communities. Making the explicit connections helped students gain a deeper understanding of equity. The prevalence of deficit thinking was initially surfaced among the aspiring school leaders in their preparation courses. By using an ecological approach with students, they themselves examined the structure, the culture context, their own agency, thus supporting a transformative leadership mindset. This mindset also influenced the participants' practices with their action research projects. Additional findings recommended systemic thinking, co-construct actualizing equity, promoting excellence across the school

culture with students, staff, families, and community, and using an assets-based approach to school procedures, norms, caring interpersonal relationships, and academic rigor. The limitation of this study, is that it was only applied to one leadership program. The lack of clarity about the number of total participants and the racialize identities of the faculty in this study is an indication of the colorblind bias of the researchers in this study. The findings can be used to guide leadership preparation course, but also have implications in professional learning with school administrators.

Both transformational leadership and transformative leadership offer practices that are important for equity. Transformational leadership has been cited in literature as important to the development of a strong leadership team (Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009), which can lead changes for excellence with equity (Szpara, 2017). Additionally, building collaborative structures, such as teacher networks (Brezicha et al., 2015; Sun & Leithwood, 2012) supports increased student achievement, in which the teachers can work together to increase their actions for equity. However, transformative leadership may offer leaders an internal guidepost which will elicit stronger practices resulting in equitable outcomes for all students (Astin & Astin, 2000; Shields, 2010). Proponents for transformative leadership critique the goal of transformational leaders, which some authors perceive as "need for the organization running smoothly and effectively," (p. 563), which may inadvertently support inequitable hegemonic structures that perpetuate cultural reproduction and unfair environments for marginalized students (Shields, 2010). Transformative leadership, requires "lives with tension & challenge; requires moral courage, activism" (Shields, 2010; p. 563) which may not be the role school administrators have the will or skill to engage in, unless it is explicitly and intentionally uplifted (Liou & Hermanns, 2017).

Research exploring transformative leadership when exploring equity, cultural competence, social justice, are often biased in their lack of reporting of the participants' racialized identities and the positionality of the researchers. The Kose (2009), McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) studies included only White educators, the Kose study White female principals and White teachers with experience. The Shields (2010) study reported several factors influencing their leadership, including gender, socioeconomic status during childhood, family history of alcoholism, entrance into the foster care system, and other self-reported factors, but the race of the two principals was never reported in the study. Similarly, in the Liou and Hermanns' (2017) study, only one sentence in the report indicated the race of two students in the leadership preparation program were Black, but there was no reporting from the researchers about the racialized identities of the other students and faculty on the study. The Brezicha et al., (2015) did not share any information about the participants in the study, but as with the previously mentioned studies, all reported the racial demographics of the students the within the schools the participants worked in. The lack of reporting of the participants' racial identity and non-exploration of how this influences one as a leader or educator reinforces a colorblind or racial erasure which can be an equity trap (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004) for both the participants and the researchers. This can also be a limitation on the part of the researchers by not surfacing their own racial and cultural positionality if they are conducting cross-cultural research (Milner, 2007).

Critical Race Theory

While a school administrator's race may not have been perceived as a salient factor in their lives, it is important for school administrators to understand how race has affected their life experiences and their leadership. Critical race theory offers a theory in understanding the salience of race in this nation. The central tenets of critical race theory (CRT) are: (a) race is a

significant factor in determining inequity in the U.S., (b) U.S. society is based on property rights, and (c) the intersection of race and property can give us an analytic lens for understanding inequities in schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 48). Understanding the tenets of critical race theory may solidify the understanding for the school administrator of the institutional and structural impact of race on their identity development and impact on their leadership.

Critical race theory (CRT) is relevant in understanding cross-cultural dimensions of leadership across different leadership theories. A qualitative study conducted by Santamaria and Jean-Marie (2014) studied female school principals (*n*=5) who identified as being from historically marginalized groups, three African American, one Mexican American, and one White woman who grew up in poverty. The data were collected from semi-structured interviews, field notes, and documents such as district literature, writing samples, and email correspondence. The schools in which the principals led were more than 75% Black and Latinx students and the majority of the students received free and reduced meals. The analysis of the data rendered the following findings supporting CRT: (a) storytelling for exploring race and racism is important to building trust with people in the dominant culture, (b) engaging in critical conversations about race helps other stakeholders support the success of all students, (c) leading by example and interrupting perceptions of marginalized women in leadership is important to the participant in the study (e) using the strength of their identity and experiences, to address and eliminate barriers to student success and connecting with families. Two findings supported transformational leadership, which were: (a) honoring the students, staff and community, (b) working to bring stakeholders to consensus in order to support a shared vision for inclusive schools, and (c) building on the strengths of the teachers. CRT is both relevant as a framework to understand the racial dynamics in this country, but also as a frame for leaders to understand how their racial

identity affects their leadership. Santamaria and Jean-Marie (2014) investigated the experiences of educational leaders whose salient racial and socioeconomic identities have been underserved, and the relevance of the findings warrant the importance of examining how school principals' identity impact leadership practice. While this study focused on the experiences of female leaders, the study did not investigate the perceptions of how gender might influence their leadership. With four of the five women identifying as a woman of color, tenants of intersectionality, or the interactive and interlocked social identities subjected to oppression, which include, race, gender, class, sexuality, gender identity, country of birth, (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013), could have offered additional insight into the experiences of the participants.

The salience of race is not only pertinent in this country, but can also influence a leader to examine a broader view of their leadership from an individual, local, and global perspective. In a multiple case study (n=22) investigating the experiences of school administrators of color in the U.S. and indigenous school principals in New Zealand, a comparative analysis was conducted over three years to investigate similarities and differences for promoting social justice, educational equity and cultural responsiveness of the leaders (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015). This study explored the ways in which leaders who experienced or identified shared oppressions could offer insight into addressing and interrupting educational inequities in the U.S. and across the world with data collected from interviews, surveys, observations, and documents written by the participants. Santamaria and Santamaria (2015) grounded their study in applied critical leadership, which they argue is interdisciplinary, drawing on transformative leadership, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010; Shields, 2010). This leadership theory also identifies characteristics leaders enact at the individual and local level such as willingness to initiate critical conversations on race, language, culture and

differences in access, and equity, and using a CRT lens for decision-making (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015). The data were analyzed and then developed into three counter narratives from the 16 U.S. participants and six New Zealand participants. The findings from the compiled counter-stories were then formulated into practices to emulate, based on their leadership examples. Findings from the study that support CRT are the following: (a) school principals entered into their leadership with informed knowledge of socio-political, cultural, racial, and linguistic context surrounding the learning environment, and (b) the school principals recognized they have bias and were willing to surface their bias, and (c) they were able to draw from positive aspects of their own identity. After reviewing literature on critical race theory and social justice leadership, DeMatthews (2016) builds on CRT for school leaders to include (a) racism and other forms of oppression are central to the experiences of people of color, (b) build authentic connections and (c) interrogate the past and reclaim the future. Empirical data from the Santamaria and Santamaria (2015) study also concluded leadership practices should include authentic interactions with people, both within the school and in the community, connect with the community to support improvement and positive educational change, and practice cultural humility which includes deferring to and seeking participation with established community leaders.

Critical race theory offers a lens in this study for cultural competence, equity, and social justice. The examination of racial identity integrates with transformational leadership (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014), which increases one's cultural competence by assessing one's self. Using a CRT lens provides leaders an opportunity to examine and enact changes for equity (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015), this practice is a way to adapt practices for equity. Finally, CRT is grounded in the larger understanding of systems of oppression and racism. The

foundation of understanding systems of oppression fueled by racist practices provides the social justice component for this study. School leaders who have this understanding can take a social justice approach to working with their staff so the educators can also be interrogating the past, to build a better present and future their students (DeMatthews, 2016).

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1977) proposed a theory of behavior change identifying dimensions of efficacy that includes past experiences, emotional arousal, verbal persuasion, and modeling of the actions (p. 195). All of these factors contribute to a person's beliefs about their ability to perform a task, or enact a change in another person so they can carry out a function or an action. A person's self-efficacy is impacted by their response to cognitive and affective processes that affect self-efficacy beliefs (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Bandura (1993) defines cognitive processes as the beliefs a leader has in their capacity to carry out an acquired skill. The affective processes, as defined by Bandura (1993) are the motivation, and resilience a leader has in persevering in the face of obstacles. Both of these processes can be supported through transformative learning processes, acquiring knowledge, and practicing a skill.

Principal efficacy. Various factors, ranging from the principals' racial identity, district support, and leadership style can affect principal, teacher, and collective efficacy. To investigate principal efficacy, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007) conducted a study examining relationships between principal efficacy and different factors in principal leadership. The researchers surveyed (*N*= 558) principals in public elementary schools in Virginia to assess antecedents to the principals' self-efficacy in management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership using the Principals' Sense of Efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004), an 18-item measure developed by the researchers. In this study, 85.5% of the participants in the study

self-identifying as White. African American principals comprised 13.4% of the participants and 1.1% identified as "other." The African American principal and "other" principal responses were combined into a category labeled "racial minority," (p. 98). Several findings in this study are relevant to supporting leaders' efficacy to lead equitable and inclusive environments. The regression analysis of the variables illustrated that building-level support had the strongest correlation (r=.42, p< .01) to principal self-efficacy beliefs, namely support from the staff, students, and parents. The other relevant correlations: district-level support (r=.34, p< .01) and quality of leadership preparation (r=.34, p< .01) were moderately correlated to self-efficacy beliefs. A weaker correlation, was identified between ethnic identity and self-efficacy. Leaders who identified as an ethnic minority, reported a slightly higher self-efficacy (r=.14, <.01) than principals who identified as White. The higher self-efficacy was across the scale in general, but the researchers noted the subscales in which the ethnic minority leaders reported data resulting in a correlation with self-efficacy and "Moral Leadership," and "Management." While the authors, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007), acknowledge that this slight correlation could be an anomaly, the authors did assert improved professional opportunities and generally less discrimination for racialized minorities could be contributing to racial minority principals experiencing greater efficacy. As the findings in the Hines and Kritsonis (2008) study surfaced, the teachers who identified as a racial minority did not view White principals as exhibiting behaviors aligned with cultural proficiency, thus surfacing differences between the minoritized principals and the White principals.

In contrast, not all studies found the racial identity relevant to principal efficacy and collective efficacy. In an educational leadership study conducted by Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), they defined self-efficacy as the belief in ones' ability to influence what goes on in the

environment through effort and persistence. They went further to define collective efficacy as a group's shared belief that together they can intentionally and persistently work toward a shared goal (Bandura, 1977). The Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) quantitative study, using random stratified sampling, surveyed 96 principals and 2,764 teachers to assess the leaders' efficacy and collective efficacy beliefs toward cultural competence. Two surveys were sent out to assess leadership self-efficacy: one to district principals and one to the teachers. The study illuminated the following conditions supported both principal efficacy and collective efficacy: (a) district conditions, (b) focus on quality, (c) emphasis on teamwork, and (d) district culture. The study further discussed how district leadership had an indirect effect on the district conditions, which include supportive working conditions for the principals and teachers, which then affected their collective efficacy. In the discussion, the authors remarked on their surprise the personal moderators, such as gender, race, and ethnicity did not yield statistically significant differences with leadership efficacy. Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) indicated external factors affecting efficacy. A deeper exploration into what external aspects of a principal leadership affect efficacy is explored in the next study.

Transformational leadership has an effect on self-efficacy, teacher efficacy, and collective efficacy. A causal comparative research design study conducted by Kurt, Duyar, and Çalik (2012) randomly sampled 813 teachers serving in 42 primary schools in Turkey. The researchers explored the relationship between principals' transformational leadership practices, teacher self-efficacy, and collective efficacy. The measures used in this study were the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass and Avolio, 1994), the collective teacher efficacy scale, (Goddard, et al., 2000) and the teacher's sense of efficacy scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998). The variables, transformational leadership, transactional

leadership, and collective efficacy were treated as group constructs and the tested for hypothesized relationships. As the researchers predicted, a significant correlational relationship was evident with transformational leadership and self-efficacy of teachers (r=0.23; p<0.01 and transformational leadership and collective efficacy *(*r=0.34; p<0.01). A further path analysis resulted in the finding the relationship between transformational leadership and self-efficacy increased by 0.14 percent due to the indirect effect of collective efficacy, thus collective efficacy is a mediating variable for transformational leadership and self-efficacy of teachers. Transformational leadership increases self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis,2007). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) assert four conditions support principal and collective efficacy: (a) district support, (b) focus on quality, (c) emphasis on teamwork, and (d) district culture. The examination of both studies illuminate the relevance both the internal leadership characteristics of principals supporting the self-efficacy in teachers and the broader conditions to support the collective efficacy of teachers. The study by Kurt et al., (2012), offers data supporting the causal relationship through their findings that collective efficacy is the mediating variable for transformational leaders in education and teacher self-efficacy.

Professional Learning

Professional learning is a process that is collaborative, requires reflective practice and is rich in content. Furthermore, professional learning uses data from students' performance outcomes and staff practices, leading to direct application in the classroom (Easton, 2008, p. 757). Learning Forward (2011), one of the national professional learning associations, offers research-based standards for professional learning. The standards are: (a) learning communities, (b) leadership, (c) resources, (d) data, (e) learning design, (f) implementation, and (e) outcomes (Killion, Crow, & Chevalier, 2011). Learning communities are effective all staff share collective responsibility

and commit to continuous improvement with common goals. Additionally, leaders advocate for both the needs of the educators and students, build capacity among teachers, and support professional learning. The efforts of both the leader and the teacher learning communities are more likely to increase educator effectiveness (Killion et al., 2011). This study is focused on supporting school administrators and in building a learning community among school administrators, small groups can focus on continuous improvement for equity, cultural competence, and social justice. The smaller groups of school administrators can become the foundation for improvement science, in which the principals and assistant principals learn fast and improve fast by using the professional learning to focus on problem specific and user-centered concerns (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2016). The learning design should integrate theory, research, and models of learning (Killion, et al., 2011). Differing from the learning of children, Knowles, a pioneer in adult education theory, offered the following assumptions: (a) adult responsibility for their decisions, (b) self-directed learning, (c) learners' previous experience, (d) readiness to learn, and (e) real-life situations (Brown, 2005). Building on adult learning theory, Fogarty and Pete (2004) propose the following qualities offer the most effective professional learning experiences: (a) sustained over time, (b) job-embedded sessions occurring at the worksite (c) interactive, (d) collegial, and (e) integrated (p. 63). Desimone and Garet (2015) further advance recommendations for effective professional learning and stipulate the sustained duration of professional development activities should be ongoing throughout the year and include 20 hours or more of contact time. They also argue collective participation with teachers or participants with the same role or learning subject areas will build a more engaged and interactive learning community (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Guskey (2002) studied professional development for teacher change and his model asserts a change in teacher classroom

practices after the professional learning may result in changes in student learning outcomes which results in teacher' beliefs and attitudes changing. Both Guskey (2002) and Fogarty and Pete (2004) predict changes in teacher practices will elicit changes in student learning and thus changes in teacher beliefs and attitudes, which contradicts the theory of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). Rohlwing and Spellman (2014) assert adult learners have to make meaning of the experiences. The authors further contend the quantity of the person's experiences is not as relevant as taking the time and effort to make meaning of one's experiences, thus the quality of the learning experience becomes more relevant to an adult learner. Professional learning that creates transformative learning experiences for school leaders will more likely enable the participants in the professional learning to reflect on their values, beliefs, how they want to enact their actions for equity, cultural competence, and social justice.

Individual Learning

The experiences of school administrators are unique in their school because of their leadership positions. As such professional learning, should be target to their learning needs. Content for school administrators should have both information that will develop their leadership skills and opportunities for problem-based learning (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; van Veelen, Sleegers, & Endedijk, 2017). Administrators navigate the complexity of implementing districtwide initiatives by facilitating the teachers' change in practices. The core focus in any change initiatives are to support student learning (Desimone & Garet, 2015; van Veelen et al., 2017), and as a result, problem-based learning offers both school administrators and teaches the real-world relevance (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017). An additional challenge is the context of a principal's work environment. The principal's time is not constrained by classroom schedules and thus offers an opportunity for individual coaching. However, embedded

professional learning would not have the same relevance with only one or two people in the school engaging in the PL (Darling–Hammond et al., 2017; van Veelen et al., 2017). Self-efficacy, described by Bandura (1977) and expanded upon by Tschannen-Moran and Chen (2014) states self-awareness of one's responses to stress in taking on a new task and mastery experiences helps to increase the belief that one can carry out a new task or behavior. Self-awareness can be increase by taking the time to pause and reflect. The opportunity for deep reflection is critical for effective leaning and one in which a school administrator can individually do. The medium for the reflection is open, as the literature review did not recommend one over another but did state the practice of planning, monitoring and reflecting on experiences is essential for adult learning (Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2017) assert feedback and reflection are significant for PL. Consequently, individual learning and reflection of school administrators are an important piece of the professional learning; however, when practiced in isolation, it does not offer the learning environment that high-quality PL can offer. Thus, collaborative learning among school administrators is explored next.

Collective Learning

An interactive learning community is an essential feature of high quality professional learning. Collective participation and collaboration built into the design of the PL will increase its effectiveness and develop collective efficacy (Desimone & Garet, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014). The remaining two factors for self-efficacy are verbal persuasion, and vicarious experience, which require interactions with other people (Bandura, 1977). Collective efficacy is the belief of a group in effecting change for student outcomes (Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014). Engaging school administrators together to

discuss cultural competence, equity, and social justice creates a learning community, which is an identified standard for high quality PL (Learning Forward, 2017). In a learning community, the school leaders can examine data from their own school as well as school district trends to examine how they can influence change, specifically in examining inequities in student outcomes (Learning Forward, 2017). Feedback among school administrators is an important context because feedback from peers is more authentic and better received than feedback from the staff of school administrators (van Veelen et al., 2017). In summation, developing the learning community builds collective efficacy among school administrators (Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014) to support their teacher in the collective belief that the teachers can effectively teach students through an examination of their own cultural competence, and practices for equity and social justice.

Leading Change

Leadership is an important factor in supporting student outcomes and is identified as one of the standards for professional learning (Learning Forward, 2017). The importance of leadership for student outcomes is synthesized in Tallerica (2014) with the following recommendations: (a) setting direction, (b) developing people, and (c) structuring workplace conditions. The recommendations in the context of leading for cultural competence, equity, and social justice is explored next.

District goals drive school-based goals toward student outcomes. Stakeholders from the district and community collaboratively set district priorities, but school administrators set the direction for the professional learning. School administrators who can co-create a vision from the direction set by the district priorities that motivates rather than mandates expectations with their teachers are more likely to empower teacher leaders to implement changes in their practices

which can result increase student outcomes (Brezicha et al.,2015). Both Tallerica (2014) and Brezicha et al., (2015) uplift the importance of developing people to collaboratively lead in their professional learning. However, Oude Groote Beverborg, Sleegers and van Veen (2015) argue that close attention has to be paid to the psychological needs of teachers to collaborate. Their argument assumes that since teachers usually work autonomously, the nature of collaboration might seem at best unusual, and at worst threatening. Professional learning for school administrators focused only on setting direction, or the organizational goals, does not prepare administrators to consider the psychological or human needs of educators. Thus, PL focused only on organizational goal will not support increasing teacher self-efficacy. It will be important for school administrators leading for change to structure working conditions so teachers are in smaller learning communities with on-going and sustained PL to ensure high quality PL (Learning Forward, 2017; Tallerica, 2014). Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull & Hunter (2016) recommend a cycle for PL, in which school improvement goals are organized around PL. The PL becomes a daily practice and expert roles are created to lead PL in the schools and system (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016;). In this way, school administrators recognize importance of and harness the power of teacher expertise and thus teachers and school leaders share responsibility of their own learning and the leaning of teachers in the schools (Jenson et al., 2016).

Learning Design

A comprehensive and well-designed professional development includes a conceptual framework and evaluation of effective professional development. Saderholm, Ronau, Rakes, Bush, and Mohr-Schroeder (2016) argue that critical components of professional development are to build a common vision for professional learning and then to engage the participants

(*n*=413) with active participation, critical self and peer reflections, ongoing engagement sustained over time, and continuous monitoring and engagement (p. 4). The Saderholm et al (2016) mixed methods study examined two professional development summer institutes, one for mathematics teachers and one for science teachers to evaluate the overall implementation and connections of the professional development program back to the teachers' experiences in the classroom. The study chose these institutes because they were conducing statewide professional learning and agreed to use PrimeD, a professional development framework, which consists of four phases: (a) Phase I, Design and Development through a Challenge Space Lens (b) Phase II, Implementation through Networked Improvement Communities, (c) Phase III, Evaluation, Formation and Summative Assessments, and (d) Phase IV, Research. PrimeD is focused on professional learning connections that teacher explicitly make back to the classroom. Through participant surveys (*N*=413), observations, focus groups, and interviews, the study illuminated that while transformative experiences were designed into the professional development, inconsistencies in facilitator experience and content knowledge resulted in falling short of transformative learning experiences for the participants. The evaluation framework was grounded in Guskey's five levels of professional development, however only the first three levels, (a) participant's reactions, (b) participants' learning, and (c) organizational support and change were observable during the two-week institutes, as the last two levels, participants use of new knowledge and skills and student learning outcomes would take more time and follow up after the institute. Implications from this study call for an explicit framework for the professional development which includes a common vision among stakeholder, which is similar to a practice for transformational leaders (Brezicha et al., 2015) and the use of the Plan, Do,

Study, Act (PDSA) cycle is recommended in improvement science for effective school improvement (Bryk, et al., 2016).

Constructivist Theory

Adults are more likely to be engaged when they connect knowledge to their personal experiences, professionals are more likely to value professional learning when they are able to connect knowledge to their professional context. The constructivist learning theory offers framework in which the instructor creates opportunities for the learner "create meaning as opposed to acquiring it" (Ertmer & Newby, 1993, p. 62). The constructivist approach is relevant to professional learning supporting school-based leadership for cultural proficiency because it offers leader's the opportunity to learn through their own experiences, values, and beliefs and interactions with others (Nelson & Guerra, 2014).

Constructivist learning has been studied across different professions and with different content and has been found valuable to the learners in professional development settings. A qualitative study involving a purposeful sample of social workers, lawyers, adult educators, and nurses (n=80), was conducted to explore how knowledge becomes meaningful in professional practice across those four different professions (Daley, 2001). This study interviewed professionals 9 to 24 months after they attended a continuing professional development relevant to their topic, the data were collected through semi structured interviews and document analysis. One of the findings from the study indicated the different professions were framed by the context of their work. For example, social workers made meaning of the professional development through their role as an advocate and had the client's need in their mind as they processed their learning from the professional development. Lawyers, described the professional learning as a "road map" (Daley, 2001; p. 45) and took what they learned as updated information about the

law and used it to better represent their clients. Adult educators viewed themselves as "connectors" (Daley, 2001; p.46) and would take the new information and connect it to different groups they worked with, based on relevancy to that group. Lastly, nurses integrated the information so they could readily draw upon the new knowledge as needed when working with new patients. While school administrators were not recruited for this study, the complex roles of a principal and assistant principals does incorporate advocacy for students, examination of policy for disciplinary actions, connection of information for their staff and students, and integration of new knowledge for any one of the groups they lead, which include students, staff, and families. Constructivism offers a learning theory to create meaning and context for professional practice, but the issues of cultural competence, equity, and social justice, require focused context. Sociotransformative constructivism offers an orientation to teaching and learning that affirms knowledge is socially constructed and mediated by culture, history, and institutional context (Zozakiewicz & Rodriguez, 2007). This theory draws from multicultural education, as a theory of social justice, and constructivism, as a theory of learning. The four components of sociotransformative constructivism are, dialogic conversation, authentic activity, metacognition, and reflexivity. Zozakiewicz and Rodriguez (2007) investigated the use of Maxima, an intervention program focused on supporting teachers with more inquiry-based, gender inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environments through sociotransformative constructivist professional learning experiences. The project was three years long, however the study only used data collected from year one of the project. Twenty teachers participated in the study and data were collected from interviews, field notes, surveys and the data analyzed through an ethnographic approach. The teachers self-reported racial and ethnic identities were, Latino (n=1), African American woman (n=1), Latina (n=9), and White women (n=9). The participants

were interviewed three times during the year, after a summer institute professional learning, once at the end of the fall semester, and the at the end of the spring semester. The findings from the study about the professional learning uplifted the following: (a) participants valued being heard and seeing the modeling of the sociotransformative constructivist pedagogical strategies, such as problem-solving discussions and post activity reflective dialogue (b) feeling supported, with ongoing and on-site support, and (c) sharing ideas, and making connections through reflexive approaches to collaboration (Zozakiewicz & Rodriguez, 2007). While most of the participants in this study reported a transformative impact, three of the twenty teachers showed little or no change in their practices.

The Zozakiewicz & Rodriguez (2007) study with teachers and multicultural education provides a similar context to the focus of this dissertation. While the context of the Daley (2001) study examined four different professional contexts, the findings uplifted role context as relevant in the professional learning, thus indicating relevance to this dissertation's target population of school administrators. Both studies provide the unique foundation to use constructivist learning theory in this dissertation's intervention, a professional learning addressing cultural competence, equity, and social justice. Creating the trusting learning environment with the school administrators to make meaning of the knowledge gained in the professional learning and apply that knowledge within their role as an administrator will likely be beneficial to this intervention. Additionally, the problems-solving discussions involving dilemmas or connected to school administrator's own national leadership standards used in their yearly evaluation will enhance the relevance to make meaning in their professional context.

Transformative learning

In the context of adult learning, Mezirow et al., (2000) describes transformative learning as the ability to take both objective and subjective perspectives into consideration which result in reframing. The subjective perspective is the ability to surface and critically reflect a person's own assumptions when examining the following: narrative-when another person shares an experience which is different from one's own, a system-such as the school district, the socio-political environment, economic conditions or organization or workplace. The objective perspective is a person's ability to surface and reframe assumptions about a person or situation outside of themselves. The following studies examine if adopting a transformative learning approach with the opportunity for critical self-reflection results in increased support for equity, cultural competence, and social justice; one study centers on preservice school leaders, the other is with teacher candidates and an additional one explores transformative learning with mental health leaders.

Educators who are provided the opportunity to critically reflect on information and experiences which cause a dilemma within their current understanding of the education in the U.S. are more likely to question inequitable outcomes and support social justice efforts. With the purpose of supporting transformative change for equity and social justice earlier in education students, Frederick, Cave, and Perencevich (2010) conducted an interpretive case study method with 33 sophomore-level teacher candidates. The participants in the Frederick et al., (2010) study (n=33) were between the ages of 19-20 years old and 32 identified as White and one as Korean. The site of the research, a University proclaiming a strong Christian and social justice commitment. reports more than 91% of their student population as White and middle class. All of the participants in the Frederick et al., (2010) study were enrolled in an education course

which emphasized the philosophical, historical, and sociopolitical context of education in the U.S. The researchers, studied students' responses to transformative learning to texts, videos, and simulations using a qualitative approach, collecting data through questionnaires, course assignments, reflections on pre-and post-teaching philosophies, and observation projects using open and axial coding when analyzing the data. The teacher candidate had to complete an observational paper at the end of the term and 15 out of the 33 candidates chose to analyze and reflect on economic inequities in schools and the value of multicultural education. Researchers Frederick and colleagues (2010) also observed a move from a superficial understanding of multicultural education to "acknowledging the socio-cultural history and experiences of a diverse community" (p.321). Lastly, some teacher candidates not only began to examine the historical and U.S. societal contexts creating inequitable structure in the current educational system, but took ownership of their learning and discussed who they can make a difference in their current school and when they are teaching in schools. This study helped to demonstrate the importance of hands on meaningful experiences in teacher training and even more so among homogeneous groups.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are valuable to investigating transformative learning. Brown (2006) used a mixed methods approach to their study to explore transformative learning with 40 preservice leaders during their enrollment in a leadership preparation cohort. The study took place over two years and with two cohorts of students and grounded their theoretical framework weaving three principles for transformative leaders: (a) adult learning theory, (b) transformative learning, and (c) critical social theory. The quantitative method to examine the preservice attitudes of diversity in education after engaging in transformative learning strategies. The Pettus and Allain (1999) Cultural and Educational Issues Survey

(Version B) was used to assess responses both pre- and post- intervention to assess the preservice leaders' attitudes toward diversity in education. The responses are rated 1= *strongly agree* to 5= *strongly disagree*, so as a result, lower ratings actually indicate higher attitude with cultural and educational issues. Collecting qualitative data, the Brown (2006) study examined the participants' reflective journals. In contrast to the Frederick et al, (2010) study, the participants' racial identities in the Brown (2006) study, have 50% self-identifying as African American, 43% White, 2% Asian and 5% other. The racial demographics of the participants in the Brown (2006) study are notable, because as highlighted in the previous section, most of the studies in the literature review, reported a majority of White participants. Including the racial demographics in the investigation of transformative learning will offer additional data into any differences may emerge between the participants when experiencing transformative learning with the context of equity and social justice.

Transformative learning enacted a change in beliefs and increased awareness about inequities for both educational students and preservice leaders. Data collected in the measures used in the Brown (2006) study resulted in a pre-test (M=123.3, SD=17.8) and a post-test (M=109.4, SD=16.8) difference of -13.9 $p<.001$ Because lower individual scores indicate higher favorability with cultural and equity concerns in education, the overall decrease in scores indicated transformative learning strategies raised the preservice leaders' attitudes positively towards cultural and educational concerns. The findings from the Brown (2006) study indicate all of the participants (n=40) reported a statistically significant change due to the transformative learning experiences. While the results of the analysis of the quantitative data did not explore race as an independent variable, the evidence presented from the data collected in reflective journals did establish both White and Black participants experienced transformative change. The

following general themes were documented for participants' changes: (a) awareness of self through critical reflection, (b) acknowledgement of other's perspective through constructive dialogue, and (c) change in actions based on reflection. Similarly, in the Frederick et al., (2010) study maintained transformative learning resulted in the following findings from the qualitative data: (a) a deeper understanding and analysis of economic inequity in public education, (b) an awareness of marginalization of racialized students in education and privileges granted to White middle-class students, (c) a reflection on educational dilemmas existing in current schools and (d) ways to nurture culturally responsive teaching. Both the Brown (2006) and Frederick et al., (2010) studies affirm the importance of including data exploring the racial identities of the participants and using mixed methods to gain richer data and deeper analysis of the data. Lastly, Pernell-Arnold and Finley (2012) conducted a qualitative study with 98 mental health leaders to assess transformative learning. The participants were in four cohort groups and involved in a five-phase,18-session training over 10 months to increase cultural competency. Data were collected through reflection logs, which participants were expected to turn in eight times during the training. The reviewers in the study coded the participants' responses using factors from Milton Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Their model is categorized into two stages: (a) ethnocentric, which includes denial of difference, defense against difference, and minimization of difference; and (b) ethnorelative which is comprised of acceptance of difference, adaptation to difference, and integration of difference. Researchers reported the participants in all cohorts experienced a decrease in ethnocentric reflections and an increase in ethnorelative reflections from the first reflection, to the last reflection. It should be noted that the findings were not linear, thus confirming that the change process is not simple, clean, and one-directional, but rather varies and

can stagnate or go backward until the change is solidified. The time at which the participants reported an increase, rather than decrease in ethnocentric beliefs was at the mid-point of the curriculum, thus exemplifying what Mezirow (1978) describes as a disorienting dilemma. An important component of transformative learning is the disorienting dilemma because it causes a person to examine their perspectives because experiences do not fit their expectations or worldview and cannot be resolved without the person changing some of their thinking (Mezirow, 1978). Disorienting dilemmas can promote transformative learning to examine societal issues, curriculum concerns, and ethical choices. The Frederick et al., (2010) study used questions to surface these conflicting issues, which centered around societal and curriculum predicaments. Examples of questions from each dilemma in the Frederick et al., study (2010) are:

> Should schools encourage the development of a share culture or develop the cultures of subgroups? (societal dilemma) (p. 318)
>
> To what degree should the teacher allow or even encourage the children's interest, background and experiences and so on to contribute to the school curriculum? (curriculum dilemma) (p. 318)

After the participants in the Frederick et al., (2010) study identified the dilemma, they then asked themselves descriptive questions to further understand the dilemma, such as "What is going on? or "what external pressures are shaping the classroom actions?" (p. 318). The participants were then asked to interpret to explore "What message was sent by this decision?' and "How are the events being experienced by individuals and groups?" (p.318). Finally, the participants engaged in a philosophical reflection of whether the current practices were good, bad, ethical, just, for whom, in what contexts and engage in the classroom discussions by connecting their observations with content from the course readings. Strategies to promote

transformative learning in the Brown (2006) study included cultural autobiographies, life histories, diversity workshops, cross-cultural interviews, diversity presentations and panels, and as described earlier, reflective journals. While the Brown (2006) study did not explicitly delineate or offer questions to uplift dilemmas, the readings in the leadership preparation, cross-cultural interviews, and diversity panels surfaced the identification of dilemmas for the participants. Examples of transformative dilemmas from Brown (2006) are the following:

> I've always known /heard that I'm a product of my past but never fully realized to what extent. Class readings, discussions, and activities are making me more aware of my family's influence on my thinking and actions. Now I want/need to take some time and reflect deeply, to figure out what it actually is that I believe versus what my past tells me I should believe. (32-year old White female, p. 723)

> I meant by being a minority, you would think that I would not fall into stereotyping other minorities. You would also think because of my education and experiences that I would know better. This class is really making me take a deeper look at myself, at my past, and at people that are from different cultures. I am beginning to go beyond the surface and take the time to develop a true interest. (37-year old Black female, p. 723)

> I am really nervous now. Some of my views concerning some aspects of education are not the same as what I think I am going to be taught. I am getting a little confused. (42-year old Black female, p. 721)

The examples from the three studies uplift how transformative learning is progressive, not linear, supports identification, reflecting on a disorienting dilemma maybe a difficult

experience, but the reflection is important and could result in challenging previous beliefs and values. The findings from the studies in this section support designing a training or professional learning that builds critical examination of identity and how it influences leadership through, increased understanding of transformational and transformative leadership. increased understanding of barriers in education from the larger societal context. The studies also used measures which will support measuring the outcomes of the intervention. Additionally, the intervention studies on transformative learning and transformative leadership support the process for culturally proficiency leadership.

Understanding systemic oppression and privilege-social justice

The needs assessment discussed in chapter two indicated a gap in the school administrators surveyed for this study in their knowledge systems of oppression and privilege, which in this study is described in the context of social justice. This topic is important and relevant in K-12 education, but one that has been controversial. In 2006 the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education, removed the phrase "social justice" from their list of definitions because of the perception of this phrase becoming a political term. However, educators argue the importance of understanding the realities of systems of oppression and privilege are critical to equity and education, and so social justice should remain important to educators and more importantly to the students they teach (Heybach, 2006). The exploration of interventions supporting social justice will examine innovative ways to incorporate learning about social justice through the use of film and discussion, and games with simulation.

Using media to understand social justice. Films offer an opportunity to enter into difficult topics of discussion through the emotional reactions, information shared, and strategies learned in the films. A study using the medium of film to engage faculty in health care in the

topic of social justice provided support to increasing the faculty's confidence to engage in multicultural topics (Ross, Kumagai, Joiner, & Lypson, 2011). This qualitative study involved 25 participants who participated in three workshops in which they watched scenes from the film *Crash*, and engaged in either a reflective writing, a fishbowl exercise, or another form of transformative learning activity (Ross, et al., 2011). The participants were asked to complete a closed and open-ended evaluation at the end of each session. Findings from the study found that watching the excerpts from the film helped participants reflect on their own experiences and close to 90% stated watching perspectives unfamiliar to them helped them to reflect on issues social justice and diversity (Ross, et al., 2011). Additionally, the use of film and the opportunity to engage in the transformative learning experiences to make meaning of the scenes helped to increase the willingness of the participants to lead their staff in similar processes and to engage in difficult conversations (Ross et al., 2011). The study did not conduct a pre-assessment survey to gauge the participants' willingness, confidence, or understanding on the topics of race, diversity, or social justice prior to the workshop series, nor did they participate in any observation of small-group facilitation skills after the end of the workshop series. The process of using film to engage the participants with content, critically self-reflect, and increase motivation to engage their own faculty will inform the intervention for the study, however the film *Crash* is specific to stereotyping and race relations, and does not offer a deeper understanding of systems of privilege and oppression.

The topic of diversity and racism is highly charged and can quickly ignite strong emotional reactions with participant. The video *The Color of Fear* has been commonly used in diversity trainings at institutions, workplaces, community groups and in educational settings (Lim, Diamond, Chang, Primm, & Lu, 2008; Vasquez, 2006), including the Mid-Atlantic school

district. The *Color of Fear* is a non-fiction film that records nine racially and ethnically diverse men who agree to meet over a weekend and share their personal experiences and engage in emotionally charged discussions about race and systemic oppression (Vasquez, 2006). One of the facilitators of the diversity workshops, and character in the documentary, film wrote a reflective article about a challenge that emerged when using the film at a mandatory training at a K-12 school district (Vasquez, 2006). While this type of article is unusual for a literature review, the context of the diversity training in a school setting and insight from the workshop facilitator, who is also a character in the film, is highly valuable. The training was mandated for 250 staff, but the two facilitators, both featured in the documentary film, worked with groups of 20-30 people for a one-day session. The rationale to do this type of training with all the staff was a result of a concern with low academic outcomes and a high dropout rate among Latinx students, who were also the largest minoritized population in the district. Focus groups prior to the workshops held with cross-section of staff voiced concerns the mandatory training would not address deeper issues in the district that needed to change to improve the work environment such as "worker isolation, top-down directives, minimal involvement or influence in direction or decision-making, and a lack of awareness across cultures" (Vasquez, 2006; p. 184). The facilitators engaged the participants in creating a positive learning climate with activities in which the participants were to learn more about one another, before viewing the 90-minute film. After the viewing the film, and a discussion with a partner, the facilitators engaged the group in a larger discussion. At this point in the video, a White, working class, middle-aged man expressed his anger and mistrust of the information being shared about racism and systems of oppression, he went on to state that White people were the "real victims of racism and evidenced by hiring quotas and affirmative action" (Vasquez, 2006; p. 185). In a three-year study on critical media

literacy (n=215), Tisdell (2008) contends consumers of media construct their own meaning of media portrayals based on their own background experience, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation (p. 54). Vasquez (2006) stated that at the time of the challenge from the participants they offered the information and statistics the man challenged, but did not have the source documents with them to which the man stated "then you have lost all credibility" (p.185). As Vasquez (2006) wrote in his reflective article, he and his co-facilitator had to silently hold on to their internal beliefs and assumptions about human beings, which included "All human beings are affected by racism, sexism, classism, etc." and that the man challenging them was also "negatively affected by the condition of racism" (p. 185). Based on the interaction Vasquez experienced and numerous previous experiences, he suggested the following recommendations when facilitating discussions after films portraying difficult conversations: (a) first build relationships and establish trust between the participants and among the facilitators, (b) work with a co-facilitator, (c) when challenged reflect back to the person you want to understand their perspective, but set a time limit for engagement, (d) once the time limit is reached, ask for permission to meet with the person at break or after the session, (e) know your research and sources of information, (f) if the person isn't moving on, ask if you can sit with them or in front of the group, so the conversation can continue and the facilitator can model communicating across differences and stay engaged. Given the context of this study, having a protocol in which participants challenge the facilitator, who is also the researcher is important to the process. As such the contribution of the reflective article from Vasquez (2006) offers insight how the facilitator will also need to be cognizant of their beliefs about the participants engaging in the professional learning and what concerns they might be coming in with and how to engage in a way that will support learning of the group.

Staying current and not repeating the use of media will be important to the professional learning. *The Color of Fear* and *Race the Power of an Illusion* Part 1, has been regularly used in the Mid-Atlantic district's professional learning over the past several years. A film which has only been used in the CPPL in the last year is a documentary film *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity*, which offers a more in-depth understanding of interpersonal bias, and systems of privilege and oppression. Adapting the open-ended questions from Ross et al., (2011) for the evaluation and reflective questions with the documentary film *Cracking the Code: The System of Racial Inequity,* help participants engage in reflective practices and then support bridging the knowledge gap indicated with systems of oppression and privilege. The content of the film blends essential components of both *The Color of Fear* and *Race the Power of an Illusion* Part 1 with content that is currently more relevant.

Simulations to increase empathy and social justice action. Simulations and games offer an experiential learning opportunity that is student-centered, enjoyable, and applies textbook knowledge through a constructivist framework (Adelman, Rosenberg, & Hobart, 2016; Lainema, 2009). The games and simulations which also address social justice issues can increase cultural competence (Graham & Richardson, 2008) and empathy (Adelman et al., 2016; Latshaw, 2015). First, a deeper understanding of empathy and social justice in educational settings is explored, second, the connection with simulations and empathy is investigated, third, the use of an interactive game to understand diversity issues is examined, and finally the importance of using an innovative simulation/interactive game which integrates perspective taking with a deeper understanding of systemic barriers and context is argued.

Research in social work education indicates social empathy is a framework for teaching social justice (Segal & Wagaman, 2017). A quantitative study conducted with undergraduate

and graduate students between the ages of 18 to 61 years old (n=127) involved the participants in the completion of a survey, which included indicators of political affiliation and Social Empathy Index. The purpose of the study was to explore relationships between political views, social and economic justice, political affiliation, interpersonal empathy, and social empathy. The finding relevant to this dissertation, is the bivariate analysis supporting a significant relationship between interpersonal empathy and social empathy ($r = .55$, $p < .01$). In the Segal and Wagaman (2017) study interpersonal empathy did not have a significant correlational relationship with political view associated with social and economic justice, there was however a significant relationship between policy views and social empathy ($r = .44$, $p < .01$). The authors contend that in order to build macro-level understanding, the empathy building efforts in social work education has to stress both interpersonal and social empathy, specifically with contextual understanding of systemic barriers and macro perspective taking to promote social justice. In the study's implications, Segal and Wagaman (2017) provide a framework for teaching social empathy to advance social justice, which includes building social empathy with a deeper contextual understanding of historical patterns of discrimination and oppression, and macro perspective-taking with the use of role-plays, policy analysis, and developing cultural competence and cultural humility. The following study explores the use of a simulation with students in sociology courses to address the issue of domestic violence.

Simulations can increase empathy, help in teaching difficult subjects, and decrease victim-blaming. A simulation, titled, *In her Shoes*, was developed by domestic violence prevention organization in conjunction with survivors to address the underlying harmful and victim-blaming question, "Why didn't she leave?" (Adelman et al., 2016). While the context of this study is domestic violence, the data collected in the mixed method study about changes in

mindset, understanding of a difficult topic, and empathy are relevant to interventions related to social justice. The study was conducted with five classes in an introductory sociology class with college age students (*N*=74) to study the effectiveness of the simulation in four pedagogical areas: (a) global empathy, (b) developing empathetic feelings towards victims of domestic violence, (c) expanding the definition of acts of domestic violence, and (d) reducing student's victim-blaming attitudes (Latshaw, 2015). Quantitative data were collected with pre-and post-assessment using a validated empathy scale, the TEQ (Spreng et al., 2009), and qualitative data collected pre-and post-simulation from open ended prompts. Paired *t* tests were carried out to evaluate differences in the TEQ mean scores for global empathy and the qualitative data were coded and organized into emergent concepts, grouped into categories, concepts, and then themes. The findings in global empathy reported the participants (*N*=74) with a pre-simulation mean (*M*=48.64) and a post simulation (*M*=50.26) t=3.94, p<.001. The second goal, developing empathetic feelings for victims of domestic violence, also yielded notable responses pre-and post-simulation. Participants, prior to the simulation, indicated that empathy for survivors of abuse was individualized, and reported higher empathy if the survivors had small children, however, lower empathy was given when participants described the survivors as "stupid" or "bad choices," (Latshaw, 2015, p. 283) which align more with victim-blaming mentality. After the simulation, the students reported more emphasis on "external forces and structures that shaped and restricted victims' choices" (Latshaw, 2015, p. 283) and 94.68 % of the students reported the experience helped them understand the survivor's side of domestic violence and that they had higher empathy for the survivors. In an article describing the history, context, and use of *In Her Shoes*, author, Adelman et al., (2016) furthers the concept of empathy to social empathy, which is defined as the combination of "individual empathy and the deep contextual understanding of

inequities and disparity" (Segal, 2011, p.268). A more accurate definition of domestic abuse was reported after the simulation, which indicates the simulation increases the participants' understanding of a topic might be difficult to understand. Lastly, the attitudes about victim-blaming decreased after the simulation. Results from paired *t* tests indicated participants disagreeing with the statements "Some women who are abused secretly want to be treated that way," increased from 83.7% to 97.3% and the statement "Most women could find a way to get out of an abusive relationship if they really wanted to" also showed an increase of 46.0% to 67.6% disagreeing with the statement. This study uplifts the research connecting simulations to increases in empathy, understanding the perspective of those in violent situations, a deeper understanding of a complex issue, and a shift from victim-blaming. In the context of supporting school leadership there is a need to increase their actions for social justice, use simulations to increase empathy, understand the perspectives of students marginalized in schools, gain a deeper contextual understanding of systemic oppression and privilege, and shift away from deficit-thinking. These are all critical and relevant components for this dissertation's intervention.

The capacity to examine other factors and to put oneself in another person shoes, is grounded in new neuroscience research. Neuroscientists have confirmed empathy emerges when mirror neurons develop as a result of a person watching actions or understanding the experiences of another and they unconsciously become the person in the experience and not just an observer (Gerdes, Lietz, & Segal, 2011; Pfeifer, Iacoboni, Mazziotta, & Dapretto, 2008). A quantitative study (*n*=232) piloting an empathy scale to include the latest findings in neuroscience and commitment to social justice was conducted with graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in foundational social work courses (Gerdes et al., 2011). The researchers argued that measures should encompass three components of empathy to include: (a) affective response, (b) cognitive

processing, and (c) conscious decision making. The scale resulted in the following subscale and test and retest reliability: (a) affective response, r = .85 and r =.85, (b) perspective taking, r = .80 and r =.80, (c) emotional regulation, r =.80 and r =.74, (d) self-awareness, r =.59 and r = .57, and (e) empathic attitudes, r = .85 and r =.84. The subscales for affective response, perspective taking, emotional regulation, and empathetic attitudes are within the acceptable to excellent internal consistency and statistically significant (p<.001), however the subscale for self-awareness was not statistically significant. The scale has not been revised or validated as of yet to the final version of the instrument, however the authors' argument to include the three facets of empathy and to examine the subscale provides further insight into the importance of connecting empathy with social justice action. While the findings in the Gerdes et al., (2011) study are hopeful, another study found participants are more sensitive to pain and favorable bias when the "actor" in the situation is White and the observer is White, but may have lower empathy when the "actor" is White and the participant is Black (Azevedo et al., 2012). In a brain-mapping study using the Implicit Associations Test (IAT) and fMRIs, Azevedo et al., (2012) recruited a sample of university students (n=27), with 14 identified as White, and 13 as Black-African with the mean age of 24, and 11 male participants and 16 female participants. The participants were shown visual stimuli of a hand being administered a hypodermic needle (pain condition), or touched by a Q-tip, (touch condition), while they were watching the visual stimuli, they were in a scanner that map the responses in their brain to the different stimuli. In addition, the participants completed an IAT both pre-and post-brain scanning. The findings concluded that there was a linear relationship between IAT scores and increased activity in the left anterior insular cortex, (r= 0.58, P<0.005) which was the region of interest for these neuroscientists for in-group or same race bias. While the study did find automated responses in

neural activity for same-race participants and pain, the study did not find a relationship for explicit bias, thus confirming the bias is at an unconscious level. The researchers also acknowledge that empathy is complex and while this study brings forth neurological data for increased empathy with same-raced participants, additional studies with mapping the brain will continue to bring data to be analyzed. Experiential games have been used to increase cultural awareness, and next, an exploration of two games that have increased reflection and action are explored.

Experiential Games. Interactive experiential games have been used since the 1970s in diversity training across different professions (Graham & Richardson, 2008). Barnga is an example of an experiential cross-cultural game used in diversity trainings and educational settings. A card game is played in silence by participants playing in groups of four with teams of two against another team of two. The winning team stays at a home table and the losing team moves to new tables during the tournament. While the directions of the card game seem the same, there are slight changes to what makes a winning hand or variations with the value of card which changes at each table. The game is played in silence, and thus players are unable to verbally communicate when they disagree about the points for the cards and about who wins or loses at the new tables.

A qualitative study examining the outcomes of reactions, responses, and reflections from playing Barnga was the purpose of the Gallavan and Webster-Smith (2009) study. The sample was drawn from teacher candidates (n=64), with 46 women identifying in the following racial categories: African American (n=7), Asian American (n=2), White (n=31), and Latina (n=3). The racial makeup of the male participants was, African American (n=5), and White (n=11). The participants debriefed in a class conversation after the game and then took a 10-item open-ended

survey to collect feedback. The data from the survey were organized into three response categories for each open-ended question, the categories were: (a) acceptance, (b) curiosity, (c) apprehension, (d) irritation, and (e) fury. Responses were aligned to developing cultural schema, and assumptions about human tendencies and inclination, the researchers report most of the responses were classified as acceptance, curiosity, and apprehension, although examples for each category are given for questions 1-8. Responses from the last two open-ended questions were in response to "Why does this simulation applies to living?" and "Why does this simulation apply to teaching?" (Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009, p. 6). Participant responses that expressed the importance of cultural competence were "We all must be able to move in and around all cultures with knowledge and comfort," and "Teachers have to figure out how to communicate with every group of students and every student," as well as issues of inequities and opportunity to share the power, "The game is just like life: different rules for different people" or "Teachers should involve their students in establishing the rules," (Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009, p. 6). The following implications were suggested from the study: (a) facilitate student-centered conversations investigating perceptions of all people and inequities in school and society, (b) investigate the experiences of marginalized students and families in P-12 settings, and (c) examine one's own values (Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009). A limitation of this study is the high trust already established in the relationship with the instructor and the participants. The emotional responses might be very different dependent on the trust build with facilitators of the simulation who may or may not have an ongoing relationship with the participants. Additionally, observations during the game would have provided more authentic responses to the simulation and could then be compared to self-reports in the acceptance, curiosity, and apprehension categories from the surveys. Barnga is one of the experiential games used in the Mid-Atlantic

school districts CPPL. The other simulations used in the CPPL are BaFa BaFa and StarPower. Research using StarPower is explored next.

StarPower is a simulation developed in the 1960s by Shirts and has been used to surface systemic inequities, power, and societal class structures (Allen, 2008; Dundes & Harlow, 2005; Nnawulezi et al., 2013). In an article describing the use of StarPower in sociology classes, authors, Dundes and Harlow (2008) inform the reader the sociology students recognize the inequities of resources (chips) given to the three groups, the squares, circles, and triangles, but often need help with connecting the game with the dynamics of their own lives and many need real world examples. The authors suggest some of the explicit connections to the real world the students missed were hard work versus the inequities of circumstances. Uplifting differences that impede or propel social-economic advancement, such as differences school funding, exposure to cultural activities enhancing the learning experience. Even post K-12 circumstances such as the ability to pay for college, or expectations from parent or peer to attend college are all examples of inequitable circumstances. In the context of business, an exploratory study using survey methodology conducted by Allen and Carroll (2008) studied ethics in management and leadership with undergraduate students (n=25). The participants were 53% male, and 48% female. The researchers posed the question- *What ethical dilemmas did you experience while participating in StarPower*, which is akin to the disorienting dilemmas transformative learning strives to create in order for learning to occur (Mezirow, 1978). Respondents in the Allen and Carrol (2008) study also reported dilemmas within the game, such as "faced with the dilemma of whether to do the right thing or cheat, knowing full well I could get away with it," (p. 145). However, they were also able to connect it with their actions as leaders in the field of business, "It brings individuals in touch with their true ethical values and beliefs. It's easy to say you

believe one thing, but actually behaving that way is altogether another issue," (p. 145). In contrast, a qualitative study reporting the reflexive accounts of undergraduate students (*n*=14), with juniors and seniors in a psychology or Women's studies classes, and 29% Black and Latinx, and 70% White, the participants were immediately able to recognize real world connections between StarPower and the larger societal context (Nnawulezi, et al., 2013). In this study, the reflexive accounts surfaces themes that fostered a deeper ecological perspective, such as, "It is obvious that in order for change to happen, there has to be collective improvements made on a system level that increases the potential for people to thrive," (p. 3). The participants reported a parallel between the happenstance of one's birth into the circumstances of wealth or poverty. "It began with blind distribution of chips. Similar to real life socioeconomic status, your rank in the beginning of the simulation was pure chance," and "It made me think of the link that is often made between the 'hard-working' wealthy people and how they are often congratulated for 'hard work' versus being told that their position is a reflection of privilege," (Nnawulezi, et al., 2013, p. 4). The variation of participant connections of StarPower to their own lives or real world could be due the context of the simulations, the age and experiences of the participants in the studies or perspectives of the classes, which range from sociology, business, and women's studies. The use of StarPower in the Mid-Atlantic district has occurred more than twenty times over the course of ten years with about 20-30 participants per simulation.

Online Professional Learning-Communities of Inquiry Framework

With time a critical factor for school administrators' participation in this study it is important to consider online options for the professional learning. Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) proposed the Communities of Inquiry (CoI) framework to enhance engagement and communication in the newly evolving distance learning environments. The three elements

for recommended for online learning were (a) social presence, which includes emotional expression and affective responses, (b) cognitive presence which is framed in the social-constructivist perspective with a progressive inquiry process, and (c) teaching presence, which binds the development of the cognitive and social presences through the organizational and managerial components. In Garrison, Anderson, and Archer's (2010) evolution of the model, they advanced the three elements in the following ways: (a) cognitive presence to include reflective thought and critical thinking, (b) social presence describes the purposeful nature and social identity of the online community, and (c) teacher presence, which is the structure and the process for the content, but also the determiner for the sense of community and student satisfaction. While the framework has been used in over 252 studies, some researchers argue the CoI offer little evidence the framework leads to "deep and meaningful learning in a course," (Rourke & Kanuka, 2009). Research by Maddrell, Morrison, and Watson (2017) with graduate students (N=51) did conclude a strong positive correlation among CoI and student-perceived learning and satisfaction, but no relationship with the students' participation in the CoI and the learning outcomes. The CoI framework offers elements that are important to this study in planning professional learning. The social identity of the school administrators will support the social presence, the cognitive presence is aligned with the critical self-reflection for transformative learning proposed in this intervention, and lastly the teacher presence is critical in facilitating the experiences for this intervention.

Conceptual Framework for Intervention.

The intervention examines both the content on equity, cultural competence, and social justice and delivery for adult learning. The conceptual framework connects the EST and transformative learning for the intervention. Figure 4 illustrates the conceptual framework

guiding the proposed intervention with both the EE of cultural proficiency and the EST.

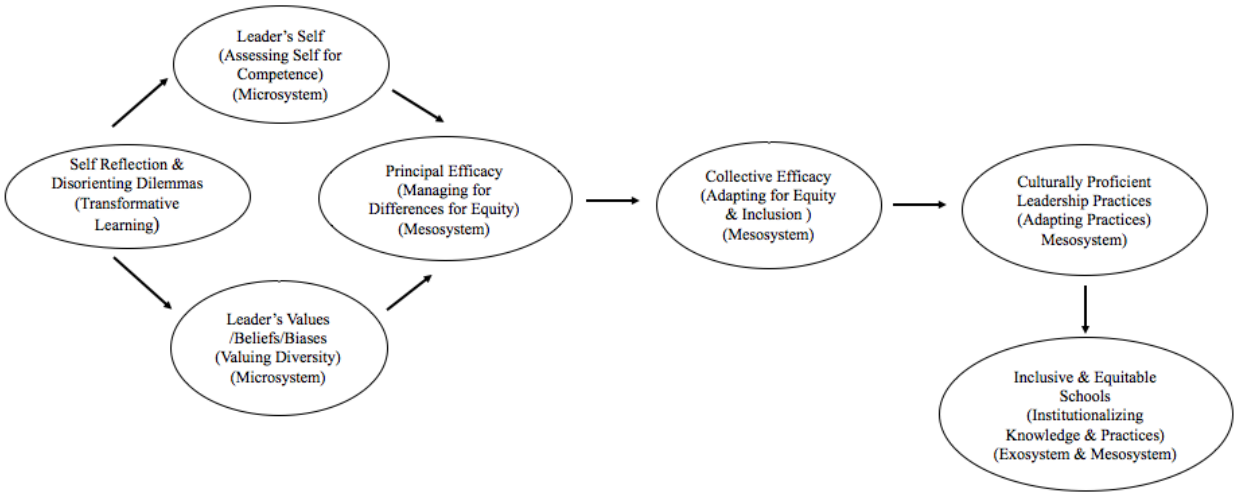


Figure 4. *The conceptual framework for the intervention integrates Bronfenbrenner's EST(1979) with the EE of cultural proficiency, Cross et al. (1989) and culturally proficient leadership (Franco, Ott, Robles, 2011)*

Summary and Overview of Proposed Interventions

Leading schools with diverse school populations is complex, as such school administrators have to be aware of the issues faced by students and how their own experiences may influence their leadership. Research supports that increasing a school administrator's understanding of racial identity and how it influences their leadership can support their actions for equity and social justice (Dillard, 1995; Evans, 2007; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2015). The exploration of personal experiences through a process of critical self-reflection can be through narrative inquiry (Boske, 2015; Collay, 2014; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). The practice of self-reflection was consistently supported in leaders examining their own issues of race, bias, and leadership and increases one's cultural competence (Bustamante et al., 2014; Collay, 2014; Guerra et al., 2013; Santamaria, 2014). Relevant to the intervention, the collection of the experiential knowledge through the cultural/racial reflections will be in alignment with a tenet of CRT. The explicit focus in CRT with recognizing people of

color have experienced racism and oppression in the U.S. will support a greater awareness for school administrators. The use of reflections that compose a racial autobiography has yielded an increase with leaders moving away from colorblindness and an increased understanding of one's identity (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). While research with school administrators, from groups marginalized in the U.S., report actions to increase opportunities for students and inclusive actions with the community (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015) other researchers found using media, simulations, and experiential games in professional learning can increase empathy and responsive actions from participants regardless of racial or cultural identity (Adelman et al., 2016; Dundes & Harlow, 2008; Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009; Lim et al., 2008; Nnawulezi et al., 2013; Ross et al, 2011; Segal & Wagaman, 2017). Increasing the school administrators' will to change practices is only successful if paired with professional learning to increase the school administrators' skills for culturally proficiency actions with include actions for equity and social justice. Leadership knowledge and practices for equity are increased through understanding how to move away from deficit thinking (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004) and leading equity teams (Kose, 2009). Understanding transformational and transformative leadership will support leaders to examine larger structural practices which do not benefit all student and may help leaders take actions to better support all students (Astin & Astin, 2000; Shields, 2010). Lastly, building principal self-efficacy to take actions for social justice is essential for increasing culturally proficient leadership practices. Including opportunities for participants to examine dilemmas in schools and to discuss how they have and how they would approach them through transformative learning experiences can be increased through verbal persuasion, awareness of one's emotional responses, and modeling actions in the professional learning.

Professional learning for school administrators is effective if it meets the learning interests of the principals and assistant principals, is engaging and offers opportunity for self-reflection (Saderholm et al, 2016). Because school administrators are in very small numbers in their schools, they are unable to easily create professional learning that will increase collective learning. To bridge this gap with professional learning, bringing together school administrators across the district to engage in a professional learning designed to meet the learning interests of school administrators on the topics of cultural competence, equity, and social justice, will more likely yield collective efficacy from this participant group (Bandura, 1977; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

Chapter Four-Intervention Procedures and Evaluation Methodology

The needs assessment and a review of the intervention literature indicate school administrators could benefit from professional learning specific to their learning needs to increase their understanding of identity, how this affects their leadership, increasing skills to address equity, and a deeper knowledge base about larger systemic barriers affecting outcomes in education for student groups. The school administrators participating in the needs assessment reported the current professional learning offered in the district did address awareness of biases and beliefs, and valuing diversity. However, the professional learning did not delve into racial identity development, which researchers have found relevant for school administrators to explore (Evans, 2007; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Kose, 2009). The needs assessment confirmed the topic of social justice was the least addressed in the current professional learning offered in the district. Research findings from the literature review affirm using media, simulations, and games increase engagement with participants when learning about social justice issues (Allen, 2008; Adelman et al., 2016; Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009; Latshaw, 2013; Lim et al., 2008;

Nnawulezi et al., 2013; Segal & Wagaman, 2017) and using narrative inquiry increases a critical understanding of one's experiences (Boske, 2015; Collay, 2014). The experiences, such as participation in games, simulations, or conversation with one another about one's lived experiences help to increase understanding about systemic privilege and oppression, and increase motivation to advocate for students who have been currently and historically marginalized (Dundes & Harlow, 2008; Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009; Nnawulezi, et al., 2013).

The context of this intervention is with school administrators, comprised of principals and assistant principals, leading in the Mid-Atlantic School system. The intervention was during the summer break and was originally planned to have face-to-face professional learning sessions and online sessions. The study took place the summer of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic and statewide stay at home orders, and thus the professional learning was moved to a wholly online model. This model created an on-going professional learning community with school administrators with an increased focus on cultural competence, equity, and social justice. This intervention is named Culturally Proficient^3 Leadership Professional Learning (CP^{3}LPL) to denote the three factors that will be targeted in this study. The professional learning framework is grounded in the standards for professional learning (Learning Forward, 2011) and meets the school administrators' professional standards for equity. The national standards used by the Mid-Atlantic district in the school administrators' yearly evaluation added standards for equity and culturally responsiveness in 2015, thus increasing the importance for school administrators to focus on equity in their leadership National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the intervention study is to provide school administrators professional learning on the topics of cultural competence, equity and social justice and examine the

relationship with culturally proficient leadership. The CP^{3}LPL is based on transformative learning principles and endeavor to increase understanding of one's racial identity and how it influences one's leadership, increase in skills to support equity and gain insights into systemic barriers affecting educational outcomes. The proposed intervention provides professional learning in the following areas: educational equity, systems of privilege and oppression, transformative and transformational leadership, and racial identity development. The research questions address both the process and outcome evaluation questions.

Process Questions:

PQ1: Was the professional learning delivered as designed?

PQ2: In what ways did a professional learning designed for school administrators support their learning interests?

PQ3: How were the school administrators engaged in the professional learning?

Research Questions:

RQ1: What was the change in school administrators' descriptions of their racial identity development as the result of a professional learning on cultural competence?

RQ2: What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about leading for equity as a result of professional learning on educational equity?

RQ3: What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about social justice affecting current educational outcomes as a result of professional learning?

RQ4: What is the change in school administrators culturally proficient leadership practices as a result of professional learning?

Research Design

A mixed methods exploratory convergent design guides this investigation. The purpose of using a mixed methods design is to obtaining multiple viewpoints to attain "completeness" (Bryman, 2006 in Creswell &Plano, 2011, p. 62), and a comprehensive analysis of the data collected (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Additionally, the varying research questions require different means to collect data using both qualitative and quantitative measures. The data was collected and analyzed separately, and then converged to compare and contrast, then to synthesize the results of the findings. The merged sets of the results are interpreted in the discussion section the findings. Mixed methods provided both the perspectives of the school administrators, and quantitative data to document any changes in their perceptions after the intervention. A purposeful sample of school administrators, recruited from the Mid-Atlantic School District, focused the intervention to both problem specific and user-centered, which is the first core principle of improvement science (Bryk et al., 2016).

The CP^{3}LPL will serve as a pilot for future PLs for school administrators interested in increasing their culturally proficient leadership practices and with this in mind, improvement science can be beneficial in this study. While the data from the qualitative and quantitative measures was collected, and analyzed separately, the findings was used to improve the PL during the implementation of the intervention. Improvement science is a better fit for educational research because the process offers a means move from simple knowledge to profound knowledge (Lewis, 2015). Building on the concept of profound knowledge and using a multi-disciplinary approach, Bryk and colleagues (2015), expanded the principles of improvement science to examine and attend to the variabilities and examine the system that produces the outcomes in education. Using disciplined inquiry to both measure each step of the inquiry, and

the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model will offer on-going assessment and evaluation during each phase of the study (Bryk et al., 2015).

The evaluation components reviewed for the PL in this intervention are based on indicators from three components of fidelity: (a) adherence (Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003 (b) participant responsiveness (Dusenbury, et al., 2003) and (c) dose (Dusenbury, et al., 2003). By including these components, the project implementation evaluation strives to balance both an "Improvement/Formative" orientation and an "Accountability/Summative" orientation as described in Stufflebeam (2003, p. 35). The "Improvement/Formative" orientation seeks guidance to set the priorities and goal for the implementation of the program and guidance in the modification for the program (Stufflebeam, 2003). For this study, guidance has been obtained with system leaders in the Mid-Atlantic district to determine the goals for the intervention. The guidance continued by seeking guidance with the implementation of the PL during the study. The second orientation, "Accountability/Summative" focuses on the record of goals and priorities, the chosen strategies, why they are chosen over other alternatives, notes on the process, and record of success, and needs that arise (Stufflebeam, 2003).

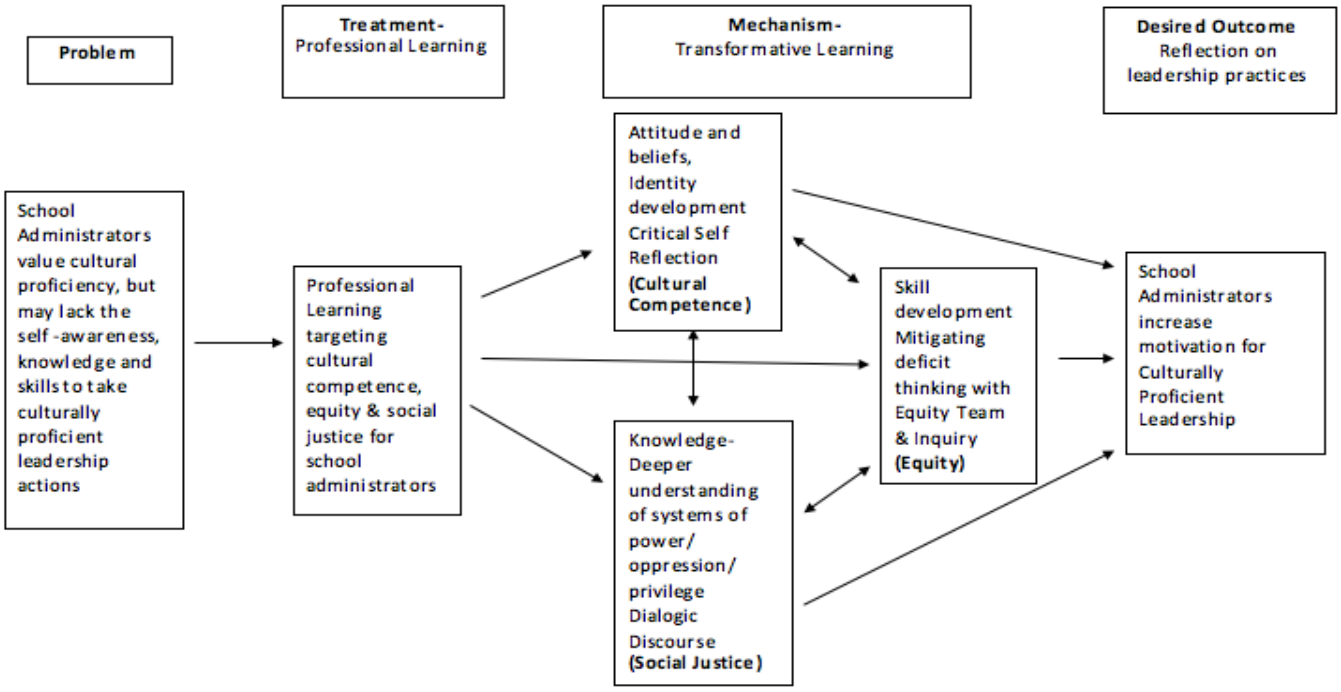
Fidelity of Implementation

An important aspect of program evaluation is the fidelity of implementation, which explores if the program or intervention was implemented as designed (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Fidelity of implementation also provides a means to explores how an idea is put into practice. For this study, the intervention was designed as a result of the findings from the needs assessment to provide PL in cultural competence, equity, and social justice. Because the CP^3LPL is a newly designed professional learning it was important to document what was originally envisioned, and what changes were made (Dusenbury, et al., 2003). Next, the fidelity

of implementation dimensions of adherence, context, participant responsiveness, and dose are detailed.

Indictors of adherence. Adherence, in process evaluation, examines whether the activities and program are consistent with the way the intervention was designed (Dusenbury et al. 2003, p.241). For this study, examining if the PL is implemented as designed provided important information to both on-going modifications during the twelve weeks and for future implementation of the CP^{3}LPL . A goal for this component was to accurately document both implementation and changes to the PL design, with weekly field notes by the researcher. The data collected from the researcher provided qualitative data focusing on the evaluation questions and was documented after each professional development session. Upon completion of the study, the field notes collected during the study were compared with the initial design to assess for adherence. The notes analyzed if the topic designed for the day were discussed in the session, or if changes were made to the CP^{3}LPL to better match the learning needs of the participants. The notes also examined the amount of time dedicated to each session of the CP^{3}LPL and if the length of time allotted for the activities in each session was completed. The Theory of Treatment (ToT), Figure 4, is based on both transformative learning and transformative leadership, to meet the desired outcome. One of the assumptions in the logic model is that transformative learning supports PL for leaders to reflect on their beliefs, increase knowledge, and perspectives and acquire the skills to take actions. As such, it was important to adhere to the design of the CP^{3}LPL to collect data on the participants' perceptions of changes in mindset and/or motivation to take culturally proficient leadership actions. The constructs for indicators of adherence are discussion of the topics designed for session, and the completion of activities within the time designated for each session of the CP^{3}LPL.

Figure 4. Theory of Treatment.



Indicators of participant responsiveness. Participant responsiveness is one of the five ways to measure fidelity implementation in a process evaluation and this component measures the experiences and engagement of the participants during the intervention (Dusenbury, et al., 2003). The experiences of the participants were important for this study because the responsiveness of the PL facilitator, provided valuable data about the participants' engagement and responsiveness to their learning interests. A goal for participant responsiveness is 100% retention of participants in the CP^{3}LPL . A second goal is 100% response rate for participants in completing the quantitative survey after each session. The third goal is for 100% of the participants to report their level of engagement for each of the sessions. The data collected for participant responsiveness on engagement was used as formative measures, meaning the responses guided the PL facilitator make changes to the content based on the participants' learning interests. Thus, adapting the CP^{3}LPL to the learning interests prior to the next session

(Dusenbury et al., 2003). Data was collected through brief survey questions, in the form of Google Survey at the end of the PL and observations during the PL, thus collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to inform this component.

Indicators of Dose. The fidelity of implementation required an examination of the amount program delivery. This indicator assessed if the number of professional developments sessions were delivered as planned, for the duration as planned, and the number of participants attending per session (Dusenbury et al, 2003). Dose is relevant to this study because the professional learning design is based on transformative learning which offers adult learners more reflection to process their thoughts and perceptions (Mezirow, 2000). While transformative learning is more effective with adult learners, the process does take more time than a stand and deliver model of professional development. The study offered school administrators the opportunity to engage in five sessions over the summer. The goal for this study was to offer 100% of the five PL sessions. Participant attendance at the sessions was documented by the PL facilitator documenting who was present at each session and then calculating to assess the percentage of school administrators attending each session.

Logic Model

The Kellogg Foundation (2004) defines a logic model as a "systemic and visual way" (p. 1) to communicate the flow of a program from the context to the expected outcomes. The logic model for this intervention, Figure *2*, located in Appendix B depicts the following: situation, inputs, outputs, outcomes (short, medium, and long-term), assumptions, and external factors which may impact the outcomes. First, the situation, in the district 63% administrators did not take principal preparation courses that included content on cultural competence, equity or social justice and although 56% of the administrators reported taking a CPPL Awareness seminar they

did not report increasing culturally proficient leadership actions. Second, the inputs needed for successful implementation of the intervention are: (a) supports from leaders in the district's offices who have an interest in the success of this intervention, (b) resources needed are the district strategic plan, participant's laptops, and meeting space, a template in district's learning management system for an online course, and a meeting space, and (d) allocation of the principal's time to attend the face-to-face sessions. Third, outputs describe the activities: (a) five-week professional learning over the summer with five face-to-face sessions. The first session was planned to be 6 hours to start of the summer intervention. The subsequent four face-to-face sessions were planned to each be for three hours each. The participants were going to be invited to attend a focus group during the course of the summer sessions. Three sessions were going to be offered at one-hour each session, and the participants would attend at their convenience. The projected number of participants will be 45 principals and assistant principals. Lastly, the logic model, Appendix B, describes the outcomes. The short-term outcomes for the intervention was: (a) an increased understanding of participant's identity and how this influences their leadership, (b) an increased knowledge social justice topics, specifically with systemic privilege and barriers, and (c) increased skills for leading an equity team. The medium-term outcomes describe the actions the participants take in schools as result of participation in the intervention, and the long-term outcomes indicate the changes in school climate, sense of belonging, academic growth, and decreasing barriers to opportunity and access for all students.

Outline of Interventions & Timeline

Method

Participants. School administrators (*n*=21) in this case, principals and assistant principals, were recruited from a Mid-Atlantic school system in which the researcher works. The

recruitment email was sent to (*N*=185) school administrators in the 77 schools, which includes three educational centers. Prior to the start of the study 28 people expressed interest, but due to time conflicts with the PL schedule the final number of participants was (*n*=21). The overall racial diversity of the school administrators in the Mid- Atlantic district is comprised of White (72%) and African-American (23%) leaders, with only a few Asian (2%) and one Latinx school administrators. The racial identities of the participants in the study were African American, 9 (43%), White, 11 (52%), and White Latinx, 1 (5%). The gender identities were female, 19 (90%) and male, 2 (10%). Additionally, the roles of the administrators were Assistant Principals, 9 (43%) and Principals, 12 (57%).

Measures and Instrumentation

Qualitative. Qualitative measures offer the researcher a means to collect data to understand what meaning people give to their realities (Schutt, 2015). The qualitative measures for this intervention study collected the following (a) leaders' reactions and responses to the content from the CP^{3}LPL (b) self-reflection on their identity and how it influences their leadership and (c) focus groups with the participants to understand their leadership experiences with cultural competence, equity, and social justice, and (c) document analysis. In examining data, the researcher looked for themes related to EE of cultural proficiency. In qualitative research the researcher is integral to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. To address fidelity in the process, the researcher wrote a journal to establish an audit trail of the activities, memoing, data collection chronology, data analysis procedures (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Quantitative. The Cultural Proficiency School Leadership Scale (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003; Hines & Kritsonis, 2008), consisting of 35 items, was administered to the

participants in the study pre-intervention and again post intervention. The scale was first used in the Smith (2004) study and Hines and Kritsonis (2008) extended the study by using a larger sample size. The construct in the scale are the EE of cultural proficiency, valuing diversity (12 items, α =.82), assessing the culture (7 items, α=.86), managing the dynamics of difference (4 items, α=.86), institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resources (4 items, α=.86), adapting to diversity (3 items, α=.83) and inclusiveness (5 items, α=.91), the overall internal consistency for this instrument was a .74 Alpha coefficient. The results from the scales were analyzed in SPSS using a single sample t-test to compare pre-and post-survey results to examine if the professional learning influenced the participants self-reports of their culturally proficient leadership actions. The descriptive statistics will examine the demographic data of the participants, which will include racial identities, gender, and current role.

Procedures

Interventions. This section provides the details for the following intervention, a professional learning encompassing the following: (a) awareness of cultural and racial identity (b) racial identity development and leadership perspective, (c) understanding educational equity, and, (d) systemic opportunities and barriers. The interventions are aligned with the EST/EE and are designed for school principal and assistant principals. A timeline for the intervention is provided in Table 4.1.

Professional learning – Assessing self. The CP^{3}LPL continues to build on the Cultural Proficiency Framework and begin with the "inside out approach" (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p.20) to support the school leader. Cultural competence will be furthered through the participants expanding an assessing of self through racial identity development. The session of the professional learning, after completing activities to increase trust with the participants, offered

content on racial identity development. Some of the information was delivered through a short lecture with Google Slides, then a time for participants to reflect in a written format, and then a discussion.

Self-Reflections-Racial Identity. In order for leaders to understand how their racial and cultural identity affects their leadership, it is important for them to first reflect on their racial and cultural identities. Using a film to engage in the conversation opened up a trusting environment to have the conversation, so the school administrators build the trust to discuss their own racial identity. The documentary film *Cracking the Codes* has multiple chapters and the first four chapters was shown during the first session. The chapters show focus on culture and identity, thus aligned with the focus on the first day. After the film discussion, the participants examined the Hoffman Integrated Model for Racial Identity Development, (Singh, 2019) which integrates both the Helms (1990) White identity and Sue and Sue (2012) racial/cultural identity development in people of color. This model offered a deeper understanding of how one's identity development may be similar or different based upon ones racial and or cultural identities. The prompts to reflect on about racial identity include: (a) Think back to the earliest time you realized you had a racial identity, it's okay if you do not remember all the exact details. Describe as much as you can about the experience. (b) What did this experience teach you to think about your own race? (c) Thinking about earliest time, write about the feelings you had as you remember the experience. (Singh, 2019; p. 13). Additional questions were posed for reflection after viewing the racial identity model. Leaders were asked to reflect on these questions and write responses in their reflections. This component of the intervention will offer the opportunity for the leader to situate themselves in the microsystem of the EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1978) and also within the EE - *assessing self-C*ross, et al.,1998).

Self-Reflections- Leadership. In addition to reflecting on racial identity, the participants reflected on how their own experiences have influenced their leadership. Prompts from Collay (2014) Steppingstones guide the reflections and examples are: (a) What were experiences in your life, specifically when you were a student, that shaped your belief about teaching and learning? (b) How did those experiences or other experiences influence your leadership? (c) Were those experiences influence your willingness or decision to become a leader for equity? (p. 786). Participants responded to the reflection questions through a Google form that was sent after the each CP^{3}LPL session.

Professional Learning- Educational Equity. Supporting the leaders in moving from knowledge to action is an important phase of this intervention. This phase of the intervention investigated if the professional learning provided motivated the leaders to consider actions that support the district's new educational equity policy. The session planned to include a review of the seven-page policy which includes implementation guidelines, contingent upon if the school board passes the proposed plan at the time of the PL. At the time of the study, the policy was still under review and revisions from the school board. The leaders were to given time write ideas for implementation on chart paper for all to view in a gallery walk. However, with the policy and implementation procedures still under review, the participants discussed equity in a broader sense how COVID-19 impacted inequities for their students. The leaders were also encouraged to reflect on how they will communicate their support and vision for educational equity. Leadership skills aligned with transformational leadership were uplifted. The professional learning was implemented by the researcher, who is also a facilitator in the county for professional learning.

Professional learning-systems of oppression and privilege. Continuing the CP^{3}LPL with the documentary film *Cracking the Code,* the last half of the film was going to be shown during another session. The last four chapters, investigate interpersonal, systemic, and institutional bias, through interviews, spoken word, and dramatized storytelling. The purpose of showing the film is to engage in deeper understanding about individual bias, systemic and institutional systems of oppression and privilege which informs an understanding of social justice issues. With changes to the PL due to time-constraints, shorter videos were used that raised issues of White privilege, internalized racism, and systemic racism. The critical self-reflection from the videos widened the participants' examination of larger societal laws, practices, and systems that have contributed to inequities impacting education. The leaders reflected immediately after viewing the film and then engage in dialogue after viewing the film. Additionally, the participants took part in the Factuality simulation game during another online session. Factuality offered an engaging and interactive means to learn about systems of privilege and oppressions. The timeline, activities, and purpose for the professional learning are displayed in Table 21.

Table 21

Timeline for CP^{3}LPL

Week (All Sessions will be over the Summer)	**Activity**	**Purpose**	**Theory**
Session One (6 hours)	Intended to be face-to-face professional learning.	Build community, agree on expectations, overview for PL and collect quantitative data.	Collective Efficacy
	Administer Cultural Proficiency Leadership Scale.		Essential Elements Cultural Proficiency
	Brave Space Agreements	Build trust within the group	

	Hopes and Concerns with the PL Diversity Timeline View Chapters 1-4 Cracking the Codes Overview racial identity development. Reflection and discussion Overview on transformational and transformative leadership Reflection and scenario discussions.	Engage the participants in content and critical self-reflection in order to increase cultural competence.	Critical Race Theory Hoffman Integrated Model for Racial Identity Theory
Session Two* Summer (3 hours)	Inclusion activity to reconnect Face-to-face-simulation *Factuality* Group debrief of the simulation Self-reflection	Gain an understanding of systemic and institutional bias, and privilege and oppression in order to increase motivation for social justice.	Transformative Learning
Session Three* (3 hours)	Face-to-face professional learning, or can be changed to online, if needed. Inclusion activity to reconnect Viewing Cracking the Codes Ch. 5-9	Examine historical perspective with systems of oppression, identity, bias and privilege in order to increase motivation for social justice.	Critical Race Theory

	Scenarios and discussion on dilemmas faced by school administrators		Self-efficacy Cognitive Dissonance
	Discussion and leadership self-reflection journal.		Self-Efficacy Critical Reflection
Session Four (3 hours)	Face-to-face session, or can be changed to online, if needed. Inclusion activity to reconnect Examining the district's new equity policy. School administrators read for clarity, concerns, and opportunities Discussion Worktime to outline initial plans to develop an equity team and implementation at the school.	Increase skills for equity.	Collective Efficacy Transformative Learning
Session 5 (3 hours)	Final sharing of racial / cultural identities and influence on leadership practices. Dilemmas leaders face in leading for equity and social justice- case discussions Celebrations and Gratitude Administer Outcomes Survey	Reflect on one's identities, experiences, and culturally proficient actions Collect data on the professional learning.	Racial Development Theory Self-efficacy Cognitive Dissonance Collective Efficacy

Administer the Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale.	Essential Element Cultural Proficiency

Note. * Depending on the schedule of the facilitator for the Factuality simulation, sessions two and three may be changed. **A third focus group will be scheduled, but if the participants attend one of the two, the need for a third focus group may not be necessary.

Data Collection. The study was conducted during the summer of 2020. The participants were recruited emails sent by the researcher. During the school year 2019-20, the researcher was working with district leaders to gain support for the intervention. In addition to support from community superintendents, communication with district leaders were to prevent overlaps with scheduling meetings or professional learning school administrators were required to attend. The outcomes for each session in the CP^3LPL and for the overall study were made explicit to the participants, so they could assess and inform their learning needs in order to motivate and inform practice. During the qualitative data collection, participant responses were anonymous. During the analysis, any qualitative responses with identifiers, were given a pseudonym in order to increase confidentiality. The quantitative survey was administered to the participants prior to the first face-to-face session and while demographic data will be collected, the surveys were anonymous. The data was collected though a Google Form through an account outside of the Mid-Atlantic district. Once the data was collected, the data was analyzed through SPSS. Table 22 specifies the details for the mixed methods data collection.

Table 22

M*ixed Methods Data Collection and Timeline*

Measure	Quantitative	Qualitative	Data Collection Type	Timeline
Self - Reflection		x	Written, visual, oral	Sessions 1, 2, 3,
Culturally Proficiency Leadership Scale (Survey)	x		Web-based survey	Session 1 Session 5 1-3
Observation		x	Field notes	Session 2
Group Discussion		x	Transcription Chat	Sessions 1-5
Professional Learning Feedback	x	x	Web-based survey	Completed after PL session 2 and 5
Participation	x		Participation Records	Sessions 1-5

Surveys. The Cultural Proficiency Leadership Scale is distributed pre-intervention at the first day of the face-to-face session and post intervention, on the final session of the CP^{3}LPL . The instrument was created by Hines and Kritsonis (2007), and is based off the work of Lindsey, et al., (2003). Permission to use the instrument was granted by the previous researchers via phone call and an email with M. Hines (personal communication, June, 6th, 2019). The items from the survey are based on the Essential Elements of culturally proficient leadership behaviors.

For this study, the EE are also examined through the lens of cultural competence, equity, and social justice. Table 23 displays the items from the survey in alignment with the factors in this study. The instrument was administered using Google Forms. The Mid-Atlantic School system, uses Google for Educators and was also used to administer the needs assessment for this study. Based on the participants' familiarity with Google Forms and the convenience of this tool, it was selected again for the intervention. The survey data was downloaded into an excel spreadsheet, and then uploaded into SPSS for statistical analysis. The CP^3LPL feedback survey was distributed after CP^3LPL session two and session five. The feedback survey had two open ended questions items, two open-ended and one Likert scale question. The questions are: 1) What have you appreciated about the professional learning so far? 2) What are suggestions to improve the professional learning? The survey was sent via Google forms, again to use a medium familiar to the participants to and easily capture the data for further analysis. These data can be analyzed in Google forms to assess for any formative feedback about the professional learning sessions.

Table 23

Items from the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Scale Aligned with the Factors of Cultural Competence, Equity, and Social Justice

Essential Elements	Cultural Competence	Equity	Social Justice
Valuing Diversity	5) Using language in documents and statements that acknowledge cultural diversity of students. 10) Providing instruction that addresses the background of diverse students. 26) Creating a school environment that inspires students and teachers to acknowledge other culture while retaining the uniqueness of their ethnic identity.	1) Designating funding and human resources to address issues that relate to cultural diversity. 13) Making decisions that are inclusive of diverse perspectives. 29) Creating school activities that appeal to demographically mixed groups of students. 35) Establishing diverse advisory groups.	12) Ensuring that school policies are responsive to the cultural makeup of the school 24) Developing programs in consultation with a diverse parent group. 25) Developing policies with stakeholders who represent the cultural makeup of students. 31) Providing leadership in creating policy statement that are inclusive of diversity.
Assessing Culture	4) Disseminating demographic information to enhance faculty members' awareness of the relevance of cultural diversity. 20) Showing sensitivity to cultural differences during performance evaluations of faculty members.	19) Increasing opportunity and access to advanced* curriculum for culturally diverse students. 3) Handling formalities to ensure that faculty and visitors are welcome to the school.	7) Encouraging staff to obtain certification in specifically designed academic instruction.

	17) Evaluating faculty members' ability to display culturally proficient behaviors.	22) Evaluating the extent to which curricular and instructional practices address the linguistic and cultural differences of students.	
Managing Dynamics of Difference	28) Accommodating diverse cultural norms that may exist in the school.	14) Providing faculty and staff members with restorative culture*** training. 32) Creating conflict resolution services for students that are restorative. ****	21) Developing complaint resolution process that have been communicated to parents.
Adapting to Diversity	16) Communicating ability to function effectively in cross cultural situations. 15) Ensuring that all groups of students and teachers are aware of how their cultural norms and behaviors influence the climate of the school	2) Exposing faculty to staff development on the strengths of diverse student populations.	
Inclusive Practices**	11) Providing inclusive environments that acknowledges the diversity of students.	9) Creating academic intervention programs that meet the needs of diverse students.	23) Organizing diverse members into interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members.

	.	27) Ensuring that extracurricular activities are inclusive of community members from ethnic groups.	35) Connecting students and staff to external organizations and resources that represent cultural diversity.
Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge	30) Providing training that develop faculty and staff members' confidence to function in cross cultural situations. 18) Maintaining school activities conducive to effectively working with and learning in cross cultural situation.	6) Creating a climate that has high academic expectations for all students.	8) Making provisions for teacher to receive training on making curriculum modification in accordance to accordance to the cultural and linguistic makeup of students. 33) Ensure that school policies promote and advocate for culturally proficient behaviors among faculty and staff members.

Note. The Cultural Proficiency Leadership Scale was developed by Hines and Kritsonis (2008) and adapted from the work of Lindsey, Robbins and Terrell (2003). *Advanced replaced the term "core" curriculum to match the goals of the Mid-Atlantic District **Inclusivity was added to the leadership scale by Hines and Kritsonis (2008). *** The term "restorative culture" replaced "conflict resolution" to align with the efforts in the Mid Atlantic district. **** At the end of the original item the words "that is restorative," was added to align with systemic efforts in the Mid Atlantic district.

Racial/Cultural Reflections. The reflections were based on prompts from the Terrell and Lindsey *Culturally Proficiency Leadership- The Personal Journey Begins Within Book,* Steppingstones*,* from Collay (2014), and prompts from *The Racial Healing Handbook* (Singh, 2019). Participants were sent the prompts via Google forms and the responses were anonymous. Example of questions for the self-reflection and are: (a) Describe when you first became aware of your race and/or ethnicity, (b) Does the racial identity development model mirror your racial development? Which parts match your experience? Which do not? (c) What were experiences in your life, specifically when you were a student, that shaped your belief about teaching and learning? In what ways to you believe your racial identity or self-identity shaped your beliefs? (d) How did those experiences or other experiences influence your leadership? (e) How does your racial or self-identity influence your leadership? The responses were compiled and then downloaded for analysis.

Participation records. Participant attendance was documented at the CP^{3}LPL sessions by the facilitator. Participation data was used to analyze differences in attendance between the sessions, patterns in attendance from the first to the last session. Additionally, the attendance was used to examine if the number of participants who agreed to participate in the study and the number who actually attend the sessions.

Field Notes. The researcher will take field notes during the CP^{3}and during the game simulation. The field notes during the professional learning will document number of participants participating in discussion prompts, exercises, and observations of participants who are not participating. The field notes during the professional learning will provide data to assess fidelity of implementation. During the game simulation, field notes will include documentation on the participant responses while engaged in the simulation, changes in body language,

emotional responses, and insights shared during the debrief of the simulation. The notes taken during the debrief will include responses from participants who share insights related to systemic privilege and barriers, which align with research outcomes for this study.

Data Analysis. The process for analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data are summarized in summary matrix in Appendix C The research questions for process and outcome evaluation are identified, as are the data, collection method, timeline and method for analysis. The plan for each research question is described in detail next.

The first process question, "Was the professional learning delivered as designed?" examines the fidelity of implementation. Qualitative analysis of documents from the original session agenda was compared to the facilitator notes taken during each session, that will document changes to the agenda. The analysis examined changes from each session and the researcher journals from each session as to why changes were made. Additionally, descriptive data on the topics covered as designed with what was actually discussed during each session was examined. Rationale for changes was be coded as: timing (the projected time for the topic was either too little or too much), engagement (participants indicated lack of interest in the topic or expressed wanting more time on the topic), and other, to document other reasons for changes to the design.

The second process question for analysis is "In what ways did the professional learning designed for school administrators support their learning interests?" The first round of analysis will examine the data and an inductive approach was used to explore codes which will be the emergent themes for this question. The second data set that will be used to analyze this process question are feedback surveys from each of the CP^3LPL sessions. The survey has two open ended questions and asks the participants what they appreciated about the PL and what could be

improved. Responses from the short answers were reviewed to make any adjustments for the last three sessions.

The last process question, "How were the school administrators engaged in the professional learning?" explores the engagement of the school administrators, through examination of attendance records. The participants were able to give into input into the dates and times for the sessions. They were then given the dates for the sessions ahead of time and asked to commit to attending all the sessions. While the summer schedule offers more flexibility in the school administrators' daily routines, it is also a time for leaders to plan for the upcoming year, and of course take vacations. With these considerations, a few people found it difficult to attend all sessions and were not accepted into the study. After the participants agreed to participate, but then had a conflict for a session, or a part of a session, they were asked to select a rationale as to why they were unable to attend, such as V=vacation, M=meeting, or I=illness. These codes helped to distinguish between absences from the CP^3LPL due to disengagement, versus competing priorities. In the recruitment materials, it was requested that participants attend all five sessions.

The next set of inquiries are the research questions for the study. Data analysis for the first research question "What was the change in school administrator' descriptions of their racial identity development and leadership perspective as the result of a professional learning on cultural competence?" were collected from self-reflections submitted by the participants. Using the Hoffman Integrated Model for Racial Identity Development (Singh, 2019), a priori codes were identified. The codes were based on the different stages of racial identity for both people who identify as White and those who identify as people of color. Examples of these a priori codes are the following: (a) conformity, (b) dissonance, (c) acceptance, (d) immersion, (e)

resistance, (f) belonging, (g) guilt/shame, (h) identity, (i) white privilege, and (k) integrative awareness. The self-reflections were reviewed by the researcher for both the first-round coding to tag with the a priori codes and the second-round coding for themes. The data were grouped into data sets participants who identify as White and Participants of Color. Additionally, the researcher will also take field notes during the session

The second research question "What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about leading for equity as a result of professional learning on educational equity?" investigates the beliefs leaders. Data collected from written self-reflections on the first day was reviewed for word frequencies, key words, and identifying any patterns from the data. From that round of analysis, the researcher looked for any emergent themes from those experiences that shaped the leaders' beliefs about leading for equity. Permission is granted for using the transcription app Otter.ai, so transcription and the chats in the online PL sessions were analyzed as well.
The third research question, "What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about social justice affecting current educational outcomes as a result of professional learning?" examined the connections participants make with structural barriers and privilege and differences with educational outcomes between student groups. Two sessions focused on this topic and the data analysis was merged. Self-reflection journals were examined for key words, and then analyze for patterns. Additionally, field notes from the sessions will also be used to assess for any themes from the sessions.

The final research question, "What is the change in school administrators culturally proficient leadership practices as a result of professional learning?" was analyzed through quantitative data analysis. The data collected from the administration of the Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale pre-intervention was downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet and after the non-

nominal data, such as race or gender, was transformed, it was uploaded to SPSS. Descriptive statistics was analyzed to gain an awareness of the participants in the study. Statistical procedures were conducted to test assumptions for normality, and the skewness and kurtosis for distribution of the scores was analyzed. The mean scores for the responses in the EE was calculated and retained to compare with post-intervention scores. Upon completion of the intervention, the participants completed the survey again and the scores were analyzed using a independent sample *t*-test statistical analysis.

Chapter Five

The intervention took place in the Mid-Atlantic public school district during the month of July 2020. A time in which the U.S. was responding to the health pandemic caused by COVID-19. However, the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Bunch (2020) argues the nation was facing a dual pandemic, which were, racial injustice, caused by systemic racism, and COVID-19. The stay at home orders, prompted by state officials to control the spread of COVID-19, increased the health disparities among the insured and uninsured. Additionally, the food and income insecurities between people who maintained an income during the stay at home orders and those facing unemployment further highlighted the economic inequities in society. People at home witnessed the murder of George Floyd on media platforms and many of them took part in national protests supporting Black Lives Matters. As a result, of the health pandemic and the increased racial justice movement, the relevance of addressing cultural competence, equity, and social justice was elevated. The mandatory closures of school buildings and stay at home orders were in effect for over four months at the start of the intervention. Due to the elimination of face-to-face meetings during COVID-19, the intervention was moved entirely to an online platform.

Process of Implementation

Recruitment. The recruitment emails and attached fliers in Appendix D were sent out to the principals and assistant principals in the district. While the original plan was to send the emails through a newsletter managed by the district's Office of School Management and Instructional Leadership, the recruitment flier was not included in the newsletters in May or June due to the closing of schools. The researcher was then granted permission by the district to send the emails directly to the school administrators. In compliance with the district's and JHU's IRB

guidance, the email was sent from the researcher's university email ID. However, in the subject line the researcher identified her name as the originator of the research request. This process helped to explain that the request for participants was for a dissertation study and not from the district office in which the researcher also worked. The purpose of adding the researcher's name in the subject line as a researcher was to offer clarity of roles and mitigate any perception of coercion. At the same time, by adding the name of the researcher from an unfamiliar email ID, the intent was to increase trust with potential participants who may recognize the researcher's name. The interested participants completed an interest form to collaboratively determine the dates and times for the five sessions.

Acceptance into the Study. The acceptance into the study required the participants to agree to attend all of the sessions. With this criterion at the onset, a few participants who were interested in participating in the study, but knew there were going to miss one or several sessions, were not accepted into the study. The criterion to commit to all five sessions did cause some frustration for participants who were genuinely interested in these topics for their leadership development. The researcher again explained that the professional learning was a part of a dissertation study versus a professional learning opportunity from the district office in which the researcher worked. While the participants agreed to attend all the sessions, if circumstances arose in which a participant could not attend a session, they were not dismissed from the study. It should be noted three participants, who agreed to attend, missed the first session due to extenuating circumstances. Because these participants had already completed the pre-survey and agreed to attend the next four session, a repeat of Session One was held with those participants prior to Session Two.

Structure of PL Sessions. The days and times for the sessions were based on the feedback on availability of the interested participants. The five sessions were scheduled in a three-week period during the month of July. The short time-frame was created to best meet the schedules of the participants within the summer break. Based on the preferences of the participants, the sessions were scheduled twice a week on the last two weeks. The meetings were on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. As per the district's IRB requirements, the meetings were scheduled outside of the administrators' and researcher's scheduled work hours.

PL Shifted from Face-to-Face to Virtual Platform. Due to the mandatory state-wide stay at home orders issued during COVID-19, all face-to-face meetings were canceled in the spring and summer of 2020. As a result, all of the professional learning (PL) was changed to a digital learning format. The changes were resubmitted to the university and district IRB as an amendment. In using the virtual platform several considerations were made to ensure ease of participation. Once the participants were established, a group email was send out to the participants with a link to the first Zoom session. A Google folder was set up with the Google Slide presentations for each session. Additionally, the folder contained a Google Doc with a table that organized the schedule for the study, and hyperlinks for the post-reflections, resources used in the sessions, and the process that would be used to examine the content. After Sessions One, Two, and Three, the participants received an email with links to two Google Forms. One link contained reflection prompts related to the session's content and the other link propelled participants to reflect on their leadership. The reflection prompts were aligned to the research questions. After Session Four, only one form was sent with two questions related to the PL and the connection to the topics of equity and social justice. This prompt was used to collect data on the experiences of the participants in the PL, and to offer more time for participants to complete

their autobiographical poem, which participants were expected to share at the final session. At the end of the last session, participants were sent two links: one was the post-Culturally Proficient Leadership Survey, and the second Google Form link contained questions pertaining to the overall design of the PL. Participant's emails were not collected in the forms, to ensure confidentiality for the participants' responses. The questions for each Google Form reflection are listed in Appendix F. A few participants requested the sessions and Zoom links be added to their work Outlook calendar, these requests were accommodated. Email reminders with the links for the sessions were send out prior to each session along with gentle reminders to complete the reflections.

Findings

PQ1: Was the professional learning delivered as designed?

The professional learning was not delivered as initially designed, due to the state-wide shut down during COVID-19: several changes were made to the structure of the PL and minor content changes were made in response to structural changes and other situations outside of the researcher's locus of control. The changes that were made and why they were made are discussed in this section. As this study is also a pilot for potential future PL offerings in the district and state, the changes to the PL further inform future iterations.

Changes to PL Structure from Initial Plan. The original plan envisioned 15 hours of face-to-face sessions with the first day taking place at the regularly held Summer Institute for School Administrators. The institute was canceled due to COVID-19 and the intervention for the study titled, Cultural Proficiency^{3}Leadership Professional Learning (CP^{3}LPL) was re-envisioned into a virtual platform. As a result of the cancelation of the Principal's Summer Institute, the full day of PL had to be eliminated. Next, a new schedule was created to meet the best practices for

PL and the unique concerns that emerged with leaders engaged in virtual meetings for extended periods of time during COVID-19. With the participants' wellbeing in mind, adjustments were made to each session to ensure participants were not experiencing additional mental fatigue and were engaged in the sessions. As a result, the new PL was redesigned for a total of 12 hours, with 10.5 hours synchronous and approximately 1.5 hours of asynchronous time, rather than the proposed face-to-face PL of 15 hours.

Maximizing the time for involvement with the participants during the sessions while offering time between sessions for self-reflection were both critical to participant engagement and transformative learning. In the original plan, very little time was requested for the participants to complete activities outside of the sessions. Time to complete the leadership surveys, reflections, feedback surveys about the PL were provided within the F2F sessions. Through the use of technology tools, such as Google Forms, Google Folders, and email, adjustments were made to collect data on the self-reflections from the participants outside of the sessions. The revised structure for the wholly online PL required two synchronous hours and two reflections to be completed outside of the synchronous sessions. Each reflection could take the participants between 15-20 minutes to complete. The last session was planned for 2.5 hours in order for each participant to share their autobiographical poem, celebrate the conclusion of our final session and complete the 12 hours of PL.

Changes to Content to the PL. The main reason changes were made to the content was time constraints. The shortened time for each meeting prompted the decision to not show the film *Cracking the Codes* in its entirety. In the original plan, the 90-minute film was divided into two viewings in Session One and Session Three. In the actual implementation of the PL the first half of the documentary film on History, Culture & Identity, and Bias was shown. However, the

investment of the 45 minutes viewing time left very little time to discuss the film. To ensure adequate time for the remaining PL topics, shorter videos on White privilege and internalized racism were substituted. The new videos totaled 15 minutes rather than 50 minutes from the remaining half of the film *Cracking the Codes*. The change with the shorter videos offered more time to process the contents of the video as a group, rather than individual reflections outside of the PL. To a lesser extent, participant engagement was the other reason the videos were changed. Several participants had already viewed the film Cracking the Codes in its entirety through district-level Cultural Proficiency PL. Despite previously viewing the videos the participants said they would have watched the entire film again and engaged in discussions with their colleagues on questions focused on leadership.

Changes to Processes in the PL. In order to accommodate conditions from the district's IRB and logistics, changes were made to the processes used in the PL, but engaging adult learners and increasing their deeper understanding of the content remained important to the design of the PL. The original design included group discussions, paired dialogues, SWOT Analysis, gallery walk which is a process in which small groups chart answers and then visit the responses from the different groups, an initial development of an equity team, self-reflection journal in which participants could enter their responses into the same journal each week, and a focus group.

The districts IRB required all of the reflection responses to be anonymous. To accommodate this request, Google Forms was used to send out the prompts for the reflections to remain anonymous, rather than having participants upload their responses into an online journal. The logistics of submitting responses into an online journal could not remain anonymous from the researcher because she was also handling the logistics for the study. After the sessions, two

links were sent to the participants. One link collected data on reflections about the content. The second link collected data on their leadership reflections. The second condition from the district prohibited focus groups, and as a result no focus groups were held during the actual implementation of the PL.

Other changes to processes occurred for different reasons ranging from logistical decisions to factors outside of the researcher's realm of control. Paired dialogues were not held, due to virtual format. While breakout rooms in Zoom could accommodate paired discussion, the benefit of using this process was assessed by the researcher. Ultimately, the value of the participants learning from each other in the main meeting room was deemed more relevant for collective efficacy and thus break out rooms were not used for paired discussions. Additionally, permission was granted by the district IRB and the participants to transcribe their group discussions and use a transcription tool, Otter.Ai to record data. Next, the original plan had a session dedicated to reviewing the district's new policy on Educational Equity, and engage in a SWOT analysis. It was anticipated that the policy would have been adopted by the school board at the time of the PL, however this was not the case. The global protests in response to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Aubrey Ahmed, and many other Black people prompted more scrutiny of Policy 1080 Educational Equity and a demand from the community for more systemic change. As a result, the policy remained in draft version and the timeline for public viewing and testimony was extended. The researcher had a dual role in this situation, as beside her function as the professional development provider she also was a co-chair of the policy committee writing the educational equity policy. The decision was made to not share the entire policy, knowing necessary revisions were forthcoming, but rather focus on the purpose statement for the policy which shared the commitment, and expectations for the school system

for educational equity. As a result, the SWOT process was eliminated from the implementation of the PL. The initial development of an equity team was not conducted, due to limited time in the session. Instead the participants reviewed and discussed the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Rubrics. Two of the Essential Elements (EE) were examined and discussed. First, managing the dynamics of difference, defined in the leadership rubric as the extent to which leader are able to embrace risk to make decisions and take action, which may not be popular with the dominant culture, but is in the best interest of underserved students. The discussion question for this element was whether the risks are the same for the different school administrators in the district. The second EE, adapting for difference, is described in the rubric as the extent to which the leaders facilitate and understanding about the effectiveness in achieving equitable outcome. The participants engaged in a discussion about districts' and schools' barriers impacting equity, and what they, as school administrators, are currently doing to eliminate barriers.

The adaption of shifting the PL into a digital space provided the opportunity to innovate a new process into the PL, an Affinity Group Fishbowl. An affinity group is the grouping of people who share a similar identity, and most often affinity groups based on race to engage in conversations (Michael & Conger, 2009). A fishbowl is a process in which participants engage in a smaller intimate conversation, and others in the room observe the discussion without interrupting or participating (Mor & Warburton, 2015). Using the fishbowl to explore interracial dynamics was outlined by Sue (1994) with training counseling graduate students. This process involved six steps: 1) all of the participants watched two videos focused on White privilege, 2) the group who identified as White unmuted their microphones and engaged in a conversation for 10-12 minutes, and the group who identified as Black listened, 3) for five minutes the Black participants reflected back to the White Affinity group what they heard in the fishbowl, and the

White Affinity group listened but could not respond, 4) all of the participants watched the two videos on internalized racism, 5) the Black participants unmuted their microphones and discussed the videos in a fishbowl for 10-12 minutes, while the White participants listened, and 6) the White participants reflected back what they heard to the Black Affinity group who listened but could not respond. The participants' responses to participating in the Affinity Fishbowl are shared later under the process question addressing the engagement of the participants in the PL. The final change with a process in the actual implementation of the PL was the addition of the *Where I'm From Poem* (Christensen, 2001). While the original PL proposed a sharing of the participants racial and cultural identity, which started with a diversity timeline, and then concluding with a sharing of their identity in a creative format of their choice, these plans were changed. The diversity timeline was excluded because of limited time on the first day. Instead the *Where I'm from Poem* (Christensen, 2001), was introduced on the first session. The researcher, also the facilitator for the PL, wrote and shared her complete poem. The participants were given time to do a prewrite, and jot some thoughts as to what they would share about themselves. Time was offered in the session to write, with relaxing music playing and a template was shared to support prewriting ideas for the poem. This process served a dual purpose, one to create space for people to engage in an introduction beyond their name and role, and two to reduce tentative anxiety in the room by playing relaxing music and giving prompts to structure the prewriting of the poem. The participants were invited to share any pieces of the prewrite they would like. The facilitator shared her poem first to provide a model of a completed product, but more importantly, to model vulnerability and risk-taking by sharing pieces of her racial and cultural identities. The poem included both the pain and joys of an immigrant experience in the U.S. The final poems were shared by the participants on the final day of the PL.

PQ2: In what ways did a professional learning designed for school administrators meet their learning interests?

A survey, *CP³LPL –Feedback on Professional Learning Design* was sent out to collect data on the ways in which the PL met the learning interests of the participants, the findings are displayed in Table 24 *Participant Feedback on Professional Learning*. While the survey was sent to all the participants *(n*=21), all but one participant in the study responded to the survey

Table 24

Participant Feedback on Professional Learning (n=20)

Survey Questions	Mean	SD
Q1. The PL supported my learning interests	4.95	.22
Q4. The PL was engaging	4.9	.03
Q8. The PL provided me ways to reflect about my leadership action for equity, cultural competence, and social justice.	4.85	.36
Q9. The PL provided me ways to consider more leadership actions for equity, cultural competence, and social justice.	4.8	.4

Note. PL=Professional Learning.

resulting in a 95.2% response rate. Responding to the general question "The professional learning supported my learning interests," with a Likert scale rating options ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) the group reported (*M*=4.95, *SD*=.22) for this question. In order to critically examine the different aspects of the PL, the survey included a multiple choice and fill in response to the question, "The following aspects supported by professional learning interests." The school administrators were able to select as many responses as they though relevant. The responses to this survey question are displayed in Table 25 *Learning Interests Met in PL*.

Table 25

Learning Interests Met in PL (*n*=20)

Q2: The following aspects supported my professional learning interests:	Participant Responses (*n*=20)
Opportunity to connect with other school administrators	20 (100%)
Content in the areas of equity, cultural competence, and social justice.	18 (90%)
Different activities- Just the Facts, Affinity Fish Bowl, Dialogues, Videos, Poems	19 (90%)
Opportunity for Self-Reflection	20 (100%)
Other	1 (5%)

the following were reported by the respondents: 100% (*n*=20) valued the collegial connections and the opportunity for self-reflections, 90% (*n*=18) reported the content in the areas of equity, cultural competence, and social justice met their learning needs, and another 90% (*n*=18) reported that the variety of activities met their learning interests. In the survey one person reported having the chance to listen and hear other perspectives helped to meet their learning interests. In additional to the quantitative findings from the survey, the participants shared responses on how the processes and the content of the PL met their learning interests. The findings in this section are organized by collective efficacy, self-reflection, and application to their leadership practice. The findings on equity, cultural competence, and social justice are analyzed further in the research questions, and the qualitative data about the activities are explored in the process question related to participant engagement.

Collective Efficacy

The PL helped school administrators develop a greater resolve and resilience towards equity, cultural competence, and social justice. Relationship building, a component of collective efficacy (Versland & Erickson, 2017), was supported through learning communities. The learning community developed at the onset of the PL create a space for school administrators to have these discussions to promote collective efficacy. The professional learning standards identifies learning communities as relevant and important to adult learning (Killion, Crow, & Chevalier, 2011). The excerpts from the survey questions exemplify the experiences of a learning community that supported another aspect of collective efficacy, building capacity (Versland & Erickson, 2017), among the participants. One leader expressed her intent in joining the study was to find collegial connections that could serve to develop her leadership: "I hoped to build a cohort of leaders that I could bounce ideas off and it provided that." That quotation also describes the importance of feedback from other school administrators in order to build collective efficacy among school administrators (van Veelen et al., 2017). Another leader found validation by learning her colleagues also struggled with the issues discussed in the study, "It is always helpful to hear the experiences of others, and also to hear what my colleagues are struggling with- it makes you feel like you are not alone, so this was beneficial." A leader also commented that while all of the participants work in the same district, they do not have the opportunity to work with one another, and while this could have been an obstacle to developing a learning community, the intentionality to build relationships in the PL provided the development of collegial connections:

> This was a conglomerate of administrators that don't usually get to work with one another, so although there was some initial hesitation to open up, I think that the

> community was built so that people felt comfortable being vulnerable. I would like to continue this space because I feel that we made so many gains over such a short period of time, and I would love to see how far we could go with this continued. Additionally, going through this experience makes me more comfortable in implementing these types of experiences/conversations with staff.

Lastly, the content of in the PL to discuss racial identity provided a chance for White leaders to gain a deeper understanding to the experiences of their Black colleagues. The opportunity to discuss and listen provided a structure to authentically learn from one another in a trusting learning community. The following quotation describes how one participant gained a greater understanding of imbalances between the experiences of people, based on race:

> I think it is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the experiences of people of color for White people. I think this helps to expose the imbalance of societal norms and systemic policies that, as a White person, I may not be aware of, or it allows me to ask questions to delve deeper into these imbalances.

The PL offered an opportunity for school administrators, who do not usually work with one another to build collective efficacy through a learning community. They were able to listen to one another and gain further perspective into one another's experiences. By engaging in these conversations, they were able to build collective efficacy to engage in conversations about racial identity.

Processes that Supported Collective Efficacy

Self-reflection

The PL supported the participants with critical self-reflection. This process was important to the PL, because critically reflecting on ones' practices, the objective information, and

subjective experiences can lead to transformative learning (Mezirow et al., 2000). One of the participants commented on how this PL met their learning interests through self-reflection, "As I continue the deep reflection, I feel that sometimes we get surface level PD, I appreciate this PL really pushing us to be vulnerable and reflective. This made the learning much deeper and worthwhile." Another leader shared how reflecting on themselves as a leader raised greater awareness about barriers in their own leadership, "This PD made me think about who I am as a leader and what some of my barriers are. It allowed me to be me and allowed me to listen to others and what they bring to the job." As with all PL, outcomes related to taking the learning and implementing action is essential to the success of the PL (Killion, Crow, & Chevalier, 2011), the following quotation describes the connection from reflection to action: "It gave me the opportunity to reflect on additional leadership actions to move my staff forward in this work." These three quotations from the participants illustrate the need for deeper reflective PL that encourages reflections on leadership and practice, in order to change practices.

Application to Leadership Practice

An interactive learning community can increase the collective efficacy of leaders to apply their learning into practice and the PL was described by the participants as offering this opportunity. The following two quotations describe an increase in participant leaders' self-efficacy, "I feel better equipped to help address the needs of my staff in this area," and "It was an excellent learning experience. It provided me with diverse strategies to use in engaging in these conversations with my staff and students." While some described an increase in strategies for culturally proficient leadership practices, one leader describes the challenge of leading staff members who are not aligned with the value of equity: "I still wonder about what to do when we know a staff member does not believe in equity and the value of all students." This quotation

does show the need to create space in PL for leaders to honestly ask question in a trusting learning community in order to practice leadership skill. Race was another topic identified in application to leadership practice. One leader reflected on increasing awareness among other administrators to the experiences of Black administrators:

> I think having a panel of admin who are people of color would be extremely beneficial to our White admin. I think it would be extremely humbling for White admin to hear stories, like the one of the African American leaders shared about how he is looking forward to retirement, not because of retirement but because he is tired of constantly defending himself. Unreal! People need to hear these stories.

In summation, this PL succeeded in creating a learning environment specifically for school administrators. The elements of the PL that all participants described as most meeting their learning interests were opportunities to build collective efficacy, self-reflection, and strategies to practice and apply culturally proficient leadership practices. Additionally, the information on the targeted areas of cultural competence, equity, and social justice, along with the different activities, met the learning interests of the school administrators in the PL.

PQ3: How were the participants engaged in the professional learning?

This process question explores the engagement of the participants in the PL through the attendance records and with the different activities designed to increase engagement. The attendance record documented three of the five sessions hosted 100% (N=21) attendance from the participants. Session 3 had 90% (n=19) with one participant not being able to attend because of a last-minute family situation, and another participant reporting illness. The final session had 95% (n=20) and the participant later emailed stating she did not see the reminder and missed the

session. The participant did email and shared: “OMG Razia - I completely forgot about yesterday's session… I am so sorry!!!!! What do you need me to do to make it up? I want to make sure I don't mess up anything for your doctorate. I am so sorry,” indicating high motivation to both the intervention and the study.

To analyze the engagement of the participants within the different activities, the same survey, *CP³LPL –Feedback on Professional Learning Design* collected data on how engaging the participants found the PL. One question on the survey, “The professional learning was engaging.” offered a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), and participants reported high engagement (M=4.9. SD=.3). Next, the data collected about the participation in the different activities are reviewed.

Transformative Learning Increased Awareness and Motivation

Unlearning and Relearning

The film, *Cracking the Codes*, a powerful documentary, challenges the viewer to examine multiple aspects of U.S history from counter narratives of people whose voices have been absent from American textbooks. A 35-minute segment of the film was shown on Session One. The portion of the film shown focused on U.S. history that is untold including topics such as the history of enslavement in Puerto Rico, testing of nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands, and the occupation of Hawaii. These events are often cited as new information that participants did not learn in their own schooling. Those specific examples were shared by participants, however many of the participants stated they have been doing additional reading about the history of oppression and racism in the U.S. because of the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and protests for Black Lives Matter. Two participants reported most of the content shared in the history portion of the film was new to them. Many shared about how they learned aspects of

U.S. history in depth and from different perspectives outside of their K-12 schooling. The quotation below describes one participant's journey with learning history:

> I've primarily learned true history as an adult learner. Most of my K-12 education was "white washed" with a few nods to African American and Black history every February. I have a minor in history - but feel like even that lacked in what was necessary. Every professor I had for history was a white male and focused their attention on things they were passionate about or wrote papers about (for example I have an extensive knowledge of the history of Western Europe) but NEVER learned about Juneteenth until I was out of school (as a reminder I have a MINOR in history from a university - if this tells you how lacking our education systems are in this regard). I did not learn about or understanding my White privilege until I was a first-year administrative intern. A new parent to our school met with me to share that she felt her son's grades were reflective of bias - I immediately and wrongly dismissed her because I had co-taught with the teacher and thought she was "nice" and I didn't see her as racist. The parent was far more gracious to me than I deserved and pointed out that I wouldn't ever know what it felt like or really what to look for or experience. At that point I began educating myself. I didn't realize the extent of my white privilege until my first year as a principal in a predominantly black school and don't think I truly understood my role to work against my own complicity in systemic racism until I was a second-year principal (this is largely credited to my strong relationship and daily conversation with my Black assistant principal who has become one of my best friends). It is not until this year when I've truly committed to educating myself relentlessly about anti-racism that I am even beginning to understand the depths

of systemic and systemic racism (and I have so much work and learning left to do - which is why I am excited for this course).

The additional sections of the film explore identity and “Whiteness” as the dominant culture in the U.S. The participants’ reflections expressed an interrogation of their racial and cultural identity, the dominance of White cultural norms, and how White cultural norms were highly valued in both society and schools. An in-depth exploration of the leadership reflection on racial identities is examined later with the first research question probing the racial identity development, the quotations below exemplifies participants connecting to “whiteness” and the impact on students of color after watching the film:

> The whiteness affects cultural and societal norms because one does not always stop and think about all races and ethnicities when making decisions, planning events, etc. in a school. To stop and think about "all" may take work and time and although this is not the lens I look through others want to take a quick easy route and plan to the norm. The norm is not always sensitive, right or inclusive or makes students feel a sense of belonging in the classroom or school building.

> Schools are designed to reflect middle and upper class white norms. My two placements as a principal have been at first - one of the most diverse high needs schools in our county and now at one of the most affluent high achieving schools. The disparities are glaring. School systems were designed to serve and promote students in my current placement. School systems were never designed that my prior placement would "beat" my current affluent and high achieving placement. Also, I don't believe that even many well-meaning people in the system (outside of our admin team and staff) believed they ever

could. The inequities in the system are glaring in things like the code of conduct, language in policy, school finance policies, school norms, ways that GT placements are identified and handled, paths to higher level coursework and so much more...

The school administrators in the study acknowledged the incomplete and White-centered education they received. Using the medium of film, participants were able to understand the dominant perspective of their own education. Subsequently, they voiced the importance for them to critically examine historical and their understanding of current information. Thus, it is important to unlearn and relearn their understanding of history. The second part of relearning was when participants examined their own racial identity development so they could relearn how it may influence actions they currently take as school leaders.

Perspective-Taking

Empathy among participants was increased through the opportunity for perspective taking. Perspective taking takes place when people from different groups are able to decrease negative stereotypes and increase understanding about different experiences through interactions and interactions that increase affective responses, most often empathy (Vesico, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2004). This simulation game, *Just the Facts,* created by a Black woman, Natalie Gillard, offers an experience for players to imagine themselves as a character whose identities are vastly different from their own. This game, originally a board game, *Factuality*, fashioned after a *Monopoly* board, engages the participants in game-play while advantages and disadvantages in the game are tiered systems of privilege and oppression people encounter in the U. S. The game was modified during COVID-19 to be a wholly online experience and renamed *Just the Facts*. The game creator generously donated her time for this dissertation study. The participants in the study "played" the game for an hour and then engaged in a 30-minute

discussion with Gillard. One person described the experience in this way, “The game was an amazing way to get people to see another person’s experience and perspective.” After the 90-minute session ended, the participants remained anther 30-minutes to discuss the game, connections to their own lives, and their leadership in their schools. Below is an excerpt from a participant who identifies as African American connecting the game to aspect of her own life:

> I have been the victim of housing discrimination, although not redlining, being made to feel like I am not welcome in the neighborhood or community because of my race. In addition, understanding the challenges some of my family members face when acquiring necessary resources like adequate health care, safe and affordable living conditions etc…

The same leader then reflected how the structural inequities affect her students, and the importance of recognizing presentation of trauma due to the systems of oppression resulting inequities. Another participant connected the context of COVID-19 with the heightened awareness on equity for her, but meeting with resistance in the community to support equity. Both examples are below:

> As an African American woman, I have an awareness of the structural inequality that exists and I have learned how to forge through it. However, when we think of this through the eyes of our children we, as a school system, haven’t assessed the trauma it can create. There was a moment in our discussion yesterday where this conversation was brought up. We have to take the time provide our staff with more support on understanding the impact these structural inequalities create and the ACE [Adverse Childhood Experiences] factors associated with them. This will lead to a more cultural competence environment built on trust and awareness.

The next example describes the importance of perspective taking and for leaders to create opportunities for their students and staff to do the same. This school administrator also describes the importance of moving from understanding to taking action:

> For my students, as well as staff, I continuously think about how do I get them Bryan's and Rick/Richs of the game (and my school) to see things from a different perspective. How do we get students, staff and families to engage in a game like this to better understand different perspectives, but not only to understand, but to take actionable steps to change?

The use of the innovative simulation game increase perspective-taking among the participants which kept the participants engaged in the PL. The leaders valued the ability to gain further insight and increased empathy into another person's experience by taking on a character, but realizing this understanding was insufficient to advance empathy. Perspective-taking in an important step to increase the school administrators' commitment to towards culturally proficient leadership practices, and simulation games help to increase perspective taking.

Growing Through Discomfort

The Affinity Group Fishbowl and Videos activity generated responses where participants shared feelings ranging from challenging to awkward, but remained engaged in the process. This quotation sums up the participants' appreciation of the activity: "The experience is a little awkward but also necessary. The rewards come with new discoveries." Another participant expressed a sense of community among Black Affinity Group by sharing their pain due to internalized racism:

> It was nice to be a part of a group that had similar experiences and emotions around internalized racism. Although many of us were unwilling to share in-depth details of our

experiences, there was a quiet solidarity that existed amongst the group. We all knew and understood that pain and trauma it has caused.

While some participants shared reasons why the activity was valuable to them, others, while engaged in the activity, had different responses to the activity. One White participant expressed hurt and confusion after the activity, while another White participant described her initial discomfort, and the opportunity to reflect as she listened to the Black School Affinity Group's fishbowl:

> The Affinity Fishbowl evoked raw emotions. I found myself highly emotional from hearing responses and feeling judged by my own emotions. I read into facial expressions when the expressions may not have been about me. The activity became highly personal for me. I have reflected for days now and cannot really drill down the why. Is it guilt - guilt for not knowing what others have gone through in life? Is it empathy - empathy for those that have been harmed by just the color of their skin? Is it lack of knowledge...? I just do not know, but the activity left me hurt and more confused.

> I initially felt uncomfortable being in the White affinity fishbowl; I did not want to do it and was worried about coming across as naïve and uninformed. I was worried that what I said was going to offend the people of color in the group, but I decided to be honest and own my experiences. I felt better after sharing and appreciated the reflection that was shared about what was said in the fishbowl from the people of color because that made me think more about my experiences and how my view of the world is different from others.

Professional learning that provides opportunity to growth by normalizing discomfort supports leadership growth for culturally proficient leadership practices. The learning environment has to have a foundation of relationships build through trust which increases the leaders remaining engaged in the PL, even when experiencing discomfort with the content or an activity. The balance is to find the ensure enough trust is built in the group to delve into topics causing discomfort, and to be transparent with why behind the topic or activity. Thus, the trust is critical with the facilitator of the experience as well as with the participants to for growing through discomfort.

Modeling Authenticity and Vulnerability to Connect

The activity, *Where I'm From*- Poem introduced at the first session, was initially intended to offer an inclusion activity rather than an ice-breaker (Garmston & Wellman, 2016). An inclusion activity offers participants a means to begin story-telling and prepare them to surface and share values and beliefs (Garmston & Wellman, 2016). While the *Where I'm From Poem* is adapted from an activity designed to bring students more authentically into the classroom (Christensen, 2001), this process was adapted for adult learners by offering some structure, but ensuring flexibility and creativity. The facilitator had already written her own poem, and shared it during session one. The poem modeled vulnerability and elements of the poem that would share values and identity. A prewrite template, located in Appendix E, was given to staff, and during the session, reflective music was played for five minutes so the participants could journal their initial thoughts. In session one, the participants were asked to share their name, and a few elements of their poem. At the final session, each participant shared their final poem with the group. Another template for the poem, adapted from the article by Christensen (2001) is shared

in Appendix F. Below are three examples of poems that were shared ways in which leaders reflected on their values, background and current leadership:

Leader Devon (pseudonym)

I am a child born prematurely as a result of domestic violence

I wonder how to make the most difference during my time here

I hear the laughter of my babies even when we're not in the same space

I see injustices in the world and it vexes me

I want to be a leader that walks the talk

I am an introvert who finds freedom in discipline

I pretend to play superheroes with my children

I feel inspired to be a better man than the one who made my life possible

I touch the lives of young people in my role as a school leader

I worry about the world my children will face when I am not here

I cry when I or others lose loved ones

I am a son, a brother, a husband and a father

I understand that hard work beats talent

I say success is more likely when you work with and through others

I dream only on very rare occasions and only about random things

I try to begin each day anew and make it better than the one before

I hope to leave a legacy both personally and professionally that those before me would be proud of

I am working hard to find my purpose and make a difference

Leader Amari (pseudonym)

I am strong. I am from strong family ties, hard work and determination, determination, faith, strength and courage.

I am from family dinners and conversations and the smell of apple pie baking in the oven.

I am from sibling rivalry Saturday morning shampoos and cornrows with beads.

I am from Jack's double Dutch and paper dolls.

I am from the smell of cheese steak soft pretzels and water ice.

I am from the sounds of buzzing traffic's barrels, pigeons and deciduous trees.

I am from R & B and hip hop of the 80s, and 90s New Edition, Jazzy Jeff and The Fresh Prince aren't Run DMC and LL Cool J.

I am from servant leadership that believes in empowering and inspiring others.

I am committed, responsible and dedicated to what I do, and to who wants to serve.

I am from low will go.

Leader Blair (pseudonym)

I am a woman and leader.

I wonder how long until the status quo is no longer the status quo.

I hear lots of people talking, but don't always see them doing things.

I and I hope to see change.

I want a vaccine that will help us get back closer to the way things were and back to normal,

whatever that may be.

I am a woman and learner.

I pretend that I've always got my stuff together and that I always know what I'm doing.

I feel that sometimes. I'm an imposter and might just get found out.

I worry that I will become complacent.

I cry when I'm not able to give my mom a hug, which has been since March and that sucks.

I am a woman and learner.

I understand that sometimes there are things beyond my control.

I dream about retiring to the same street as all my friends so we can all live together again.

I try to listen more than I talk.

I hope for real change to come. I am a woman and learner.

In addition to the engagement during the PL, administrators could use this activity to build stronger relationships among their staff. One administrator shared, “The poems were very powerful. I am hoping to incorporate this at a staff meeting.” This activity also provided an opportunity for creative expression for the person creating the poem and increased empathy among the listeners.

RQ1: What was the change in school administrators’ descriptions of their racial identity development as the result of professional learning on cultural competence?

Cultural Competence – Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis was with the twelve items in the Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale (Hines and Kritsonis, 2008), identified as culturally competent leadership

practices in this study. Two items were determined to have statistical significance. The results of the means comparison are displayed in Table 27 Culturally Competent Subscale Items Showing Increase Pre- and Post- Intervention.

Table 26

Culturally Competent Subscale Items Showing Increase Pre-and Post-Intervention

Cultural Competence	Pre-intervention (*N*=24) Mean (*SD*)	Post-intervention (*N*=21) Mean(*SD*)
Q-25 Creating environments that inspires students and teachers to acknowledge other cultures while retaining the uniqueness of their identity.	3.25 (.61)	3.66 (.73) *
Q30 Providing training that develop faculty and staff members' confidence to function in cross cultural situations.	3.00 (.78)	3.48 (.68) *

Note. *p<.05

The data analysis determined participants in the pre-intervention to rate the items closer to 3 (*sometimes uses)* or 2 (*rarely uses)* to then move to 4 (*frequently uses*) and even 5 (*always uses*) in the post intervention. For Q25- Creating environments that inspires students and teacher to acknowledge other cultures while retaining the uniqueness of their identity, the pre-intervention was (*M*=3.25), and post-intervention (*M*=3.66) t=2.03, p<.05, indicating clinical significance. The second item resulting in statistical significance was Q30- Providing training that develop faculty and staff members' confidence to function in cross cultural situations, the findings are pre-intervention (*M*=3.00) and post-intervention (M=3.48) t=2.21, p<0.05. The frequency for the rating of 2 (*rarely uses*) in the pre-intervention data was eight responses, and for 3 (*sometimes uses*) was ten responses, in the post intervention data, only one person reported a 2 (*rarely uses*), with ten respondents reporting 3 (*sometimes uses*) and nine participants reporting 4 (*frequently uses*). The leaders participating in the study increased their leadership practices by valuing the importance of inclusiveness by acknowledging other cultures and

retaining the uniqueness of individual identities and secondly by providing training to develop the staff confidence in cross-cultural situations.

Cultural Competence-Racial Identity Development

Over the course of the PL the participants were directed to reflect on their racial identity and their racial identity development. At the start of the PL, the first reflection asked the participants when they first became aware of race and/or ethnicity. Of the 21 participants 90% (*n*=19) responded to the reflections prompts. The descriptions were quantified into an educational stage in which participants first became aware of race: (a) young age/early elementary school 53% (*n*= 10), (b) late elementary/middle school 21% (*n*=4), (c) high school 11% (*n*=2), (d) college 5% *(n*=1), as an educator 5% (*n*=1), and awareness, but when not indicated 5% (*n*=1). While the surveys were anonymous, indications of a person's race were given in some of the responses to the questions. The examples below are placed in the categories of White or Black/Person of Color only if the respondent had identified themselves as such in a response. While the example in the table may not indicate the person's race, responses within the same reflection from the respondent did indicate their racial identity. The differences between the responses based on racial identity, age of awareness and the coding from the Hoffman Integrated Racial Identity Model (HIRIM) are displayed in Table 26 *Reflections on Awareness of Racial Identity.*

Table 27

Reflections on Awareness of Racial Identity and Hoffman Integrated Racial Identity Model (HIRIM)

Educational Stage	Black/Person of Color	HIRIM	White	HIRIM
Early Age/Elementary	I feel like I was always aware. There was not an incident or a moment that made me aware.	Conformity	In elementary school- that was the first time I remember meeting another person who was not white.	Conformity
	Race was always talked about in my home.	Conformity	Throughout my entire elementary experience, there was only one student of color.	Retreat
			I became aware in second grade. A student in my class called a black student a racial slur and my parents then explained it to me (not much and not well) but I became aware of the difference.	
Late Elementary/ Middle School	I went to an all-Black catholic school (Rosa Parks Elementary) until 4th grade. When I transferred to a different school for 5th grade it became very clear to me that my skin color meant something to people.	Conformity	5th grade when I learned about slavery in school.	Acceptance
High School	I was in high school, and we lived in a predominantly white	Dissonance	Probably around middle school and high school when	Conformity

	community in Michigan. I can remember noticing how white my high school was, and then when we went with my Mom to her work (University of Michigan), I just remember seeing people of color; these experiences prompted me to look at my own skin color and notice the difference. I still struggle, though, with my white skin and Mexican heritage. My mom and one of my brothers definitely look like their Mexican heritage as do my aunts, uncles, and cousins on my Mom's side of the family. I just feel at odds, especially when people look at how "white" I am and then this feeling of judgment about being too white to be partial Mexican		I was introduced to students of other races that lived outside of my neighborhood.	
College	When I was at Loyola College and I was the only person of color in my education classes.	Dissonance	However, I did not think about the real impact that being white had on my day to day life until college.	Emergence
As an Educator			I first became aware of my race as a first-year teacher working in Baltimore City in a 100% black school of students and staff. I was a	Conformity

		white woman learning that anyone could be racist and for the first time in my life, I had people saying derogatory comments, damaging my teaching space, my personal property based on the color of my skin. I learned a black person could be racist against me and what the true definition of words like prejudice and racist meant. I thought those terms only applied to the white race in terms of how they treated the black race	Resistance

During the progression of the PL the participants continued to reflect on their racial identity and how this has influenced their life and their leadership. The participants shared reflections about their patterns of behavior. These following quotations acknowledge two Black administrators' experiences with HIRIM's Conformity Stage as it affects their leadership. This first quotation describes the recognition and deliberate actions the Black administrator takes to succeed within the constraints of the dominant culture: "Each day, I feel, I have to conform to the norms of white American in order to be successful personally and professionally." The next quotation describes the splitting of oneself and minimization of their authentic self at work. The last quotation describes the navigation of advocating for hiring more diverse staff by a Black principal:

> I disguised it as ...I don't mix my personal life with my professional life. I realize now that was because in my personal life, I could be my authentic self and at work ...I had to be a certain way.

> This year, our goal is to diversify our staff, and so we were down to two candidates and AP (assistant principal), and I both know who we wanted, but I was the only person of color on the panel, and yes, even though I'm the principal and I can make that final decision I'm a team player…. But I'm not White and I've been in the situation before. And so when we were doing the hiring. She (White AP) was the one who said, we need to hire this candidate, all things the same. This is a candidate of color, and we need this candidate. Now, her saying it is different from me saying it is interpreted differently as a black woman saying we need this staff member, you know, to help our staff. She (White AP) can say certain things that I can't say.

The participants in the study also expressed transformative experiences in which they have gained a greater understanding and commitment towards the HIRIM's stages of Internalization/Emergence and Integrative Awareness. An example of Internalization from a Black administrator is: "I find myself repeating, well- not all white people are that way or I don't think you can say a broad statement like that, etc.," and a White administrator's new perspective, resulting in Emergence, "Now I feel I am just starting to understand white privilege and the impact of it on our society." Participants who identified as Black and White expressed experiences that align with Integrative Awareness. The Black principal shared, "I feel that no matter what has occurred in my life- I can separate the hate from an entire group of people because I have always had examples that are for love instead of hate**.**" A White administrator voiced a commitment to ending their complicity when they have remained silent: "Realizing that my silence is more harmful than saying something even if it's not perfect or well-received by some. Being comfortable in the uncomfortable." The following examples below illuminate how administrators take actions that are rooted in their racial identity in order to enact changes in order to better serve all students. This quotation from a White administrator expressed increased empathy for their student after listening to their Black colleagues: "My students are younger versions of the adults present in our sessions. If I see hurt in the adult's eyes, hear hurt in their stories and voices, what are my students feeling or experiencing within our schools and community?" Another White administrator differentiated the importance of collectively working towards the common goal of the students, but maintain the dignity of one's sense of self: "Working collectively with my White colleagues towards a common goal (our students). This would include teaching our students to engage in courageous conversations around race where

they can respect a diverse perspective without losing a sense of self." The quotation below from a Black administrator summarized the importance of Integrative Awareness, especially for students.

> I found what really helped me is just trying to reach out and teach kids that there are so many different people with so many different colors that have done so much to change our society and we need to highlight those people and talk about them in a positive manner and give them a role model to look up to this.

Racial identity development begins at an early age and can affect leadership practices. The majority of the participants, 74% *(n*=14) reported being aware of race in elementary school or earlier. School administrators identifying as Black may still have to negotiate earlier stages of Racial Identity Development when they are in predominantly White professional spaces. One example is conforming to the dominant culture by compartmentalizing their personal and professional lives. Another strategy used by a Black principal is working with a White assistant principal to take the role of advocating for hiring teachers of color. Although both are taking action in Integrative Awareness, the Black principal is highly aware that other White staff may perceive her as only advocating for Black teachers out of a self-need, rather than the best interests of all students. The White administrator faces no negative perceptions in advocating for the hiring of Black teachers and may even be perceived as having more leadership practices for cultural competence, and social justice. The different experiences shared among the participants increased perspective-taking and empathy, which participants reported increased their empathy, understanding, and leadership actions to support their students with cultural competence, equity, and social justice.

RQ2: What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about leading for equity as a result of professional learning on educational equity?

The PL on the educational equity policy was not fully implemented because the policy was still undergoing revisions based on community recommendations and additional school board review. The participants did view a portion of the policy statement and purpose, but did not review the entire fifteen pages of the revised policy. Even with the shorter examination of the policy, the discussions from the overall PL provided administrators the content to express several beliefs and actions regarding leadership for equity.

Equity-Quantitative Findings

Using the Culturally Proficient Leadership Survey, twelve items were identified as practices supporting equity. Of those twelve items, four items resulted in statistically significant change for the participants at the end of the study. Table 28 *Equity Subscale Items Showing Increase Pre-and Post-Intervention* showcases the results of the mean comparison.

Table 28

Equity Subscale Items Showing Increase Pre-and Post-Intervention

Equity	Pre-Intervention (*N*=24) Mean (SD)	Post-Intervention (*N*=21) Mean (SD)
Q1- Designating funding and human resources to address issues that relate to cultural diversity.	2.88 (1.03)	3.67 (.86) **
Q29- Creating school activities that appeal to demographically mixed group of students.	3.33 (.76)	3.81 (.68) *
Q22- Evaluating the extent to which curricular and instructional practices address the linguistic and cultural differences for students.	2.96 (1.0)	3.48 (.93) *
Q9- Creating academic intervention programs that meet the needs of diverse learners.	3.33 (.87)	3.81 (.87) *

Note. *p<.05, ** p<.005

Further examination of the items illuminates changes in leadership practices post intervention that support staff, students, and instruction. The first item, Q1- Designating funding and human resources to address issues that relate to cultural diversity, pre-intervention results had three respondents report the rating 1 (*never uses*) four respondents report the rating 2 (*rarely uses*). Two of the respondents reporting 1 (*never uses*) were principals. Additionally, five respondents reported a 4 (*frequently uses*) and only one person, who is a principal, reported a 5 (*always uses*). In the post intervention results, four participants reported a 5 (*always uses*), with two principals and two assistant principals reporting they always designate funding or human resources to issues related to cultural diversity. Lastly, over half of the participants, reported a score of 4 (*frequently uses*) or above, and none of the participants reported a 1 (*never uses*).

The difference in the pre-and post-scores for Q29-Creating school activities that appeal to demographically mixed group of students, was primarily moving from 3 (*sometimes uses)* to 4 (*frequently uses*). While two items supporting academics resulting in clinical significance, Q22-Evaluating the extent to which curricular and instructional practices address the linguistic and cultural differences for students, and Q-9 Creating academic intervention programs that meet the needs of diverse learning, further examination of the pre-and post intervention data surfaces some differences in practices.

Pre-intervention data for item Q22 resulted in a lower mean score with both principals and assistant principals reporting scores of 2 (*rarely uses*) and one Assistant principal reporting a 1 (*never uses*). In the post-intervention survey over half of the scores were 4 (*frequently uses*) or above with two participants reporting 5 (*always uses*). The second item supporting academics, Q9, resulted in 21 respondents with scores 3 (*sometimes uses*) or above, with one person reporting a 1 (*never uses*) and two people reporting a 2 (*rarely uses*). The post intervention

survey had two people report a 2 (*rarely uses*), but eleven people reported a 4 (*frequently uses*) and four people, three principals and one assistant principal reported a 5 (*always uses*).

The summary the changes in leadership practices for equity were statistically significant in some items for students, staff, and instruction. The changes in mean scores from the pre-intervention data to the post intervention data display the increases, and further examination into the data displays differences in changes with principals and assistant principals' assessment of their practices. Designating funding and human resources resulted in finding with the most statistically significant change after the CP^3LPL intervention.

Equity- Increased Awareness about Inequities

Critical self-awareness, a component of transformative learning and culturally proficiency leadership was identified as a theme. Examples from the reflections are, "The professional learning has made me realize I must first understand myself in order to impact my school," and "It has forced me to stop and really consider multiple factors and it has given me the opportunity to hear and learn from others, both people of color and white, who are on the same path." The reflections also helped created the time and though for transformative learning and actions, as illuminated in the quotations below.

> The activities that we have engaged in over the past few weeks have really encouraged me to reflect on my own thinking and experiences serving as a school leader. I feel more confident, informed and equipped to lead the work with our staff, students and families.

> It has reminded me of the disparities that exist for people of color. There are so many systemic barriers, so I realize that I need to do my part as a school-based administrator to

lead in a way that facilitates a culture in my school that at the least does not increase the barriers and most decreases or breaks down the barriers.

We all come with our own biases. So, um, that statement just kind of stuck out to me. And it goes back with, you know, having high expectations for all students but in reality in different classrooms in different settings, those expectations look different depending on the students who are sitting in front of you.

In addition to the increased self-awareness about educational equity, school administrators expressed commitment to taking actions to understand the root causes of inequity and take actions to support educational equity. One participant wrote: "I have been thinking deeper about the ways that racism and biases impact students, staff, and families. I want to identify root causes and work toward systemic change. I am feeling impatient to get started." Another participant shared: "This professional learning has helped me develop a more specific and intentional approach to equity leadership," and further expanded: "I have begun to hear the professional language, the basic tenets with language around beliefs with leading with equity and I intend to use this only as a starting point in my own professional and personal development."

The COVID-19 pandemic also raised equity concerns for the school administrators. Differences between the family income levels or loss of income, and the SAT exam as a gate-opener or gate-closer were two barriers discussed. One administrator shared: "The virtual setting is clearly creating a barrier…the most vulnerable students really struggled in the spring, and I anticipate that they will really struggle for the first semester and perhaps beyond, and that makes it scarier." Additionally, the formation of supports for students from families with higher income was a raised as a barrier to equity: "Even now in this virtual world there are so many parents

talking about forming “pods” of students and hiring tutors to help their children work through the curriculum. The virtual setting is clearly creating a barrier.” As the discussion progressed, one administrator succinctly wrote in the chat box, “The problem is that people say they support the term “equity” until it impacts them negatively.” The deeper focus on systemic racism was prevalent in this Mid-Atlantic district, and many schools were collectively reading or viewing the work of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi’s on being anti-racist. One participant raised her reflections on SAT exams after watching a webinar with Dr. Kendi.

> Dr. Kendi said last night, that the SATs are a gatekeeper and he didn't use those words but kind of in hearing that, that we have students who want to go to college, but we have these SATs as a gatekeeper because perhaps their families didn't have the resources to pay for the additional tutoring that you need.

As this school administrator was speaking, they further reflected own decisions as a parent and the opportunities they were able to provide for their daughter. The quotation from the same leader continues below:

> I mean, I know I am just speaking from my experience with my own daughter, like we did have to pay a tutor to for her to improve her scores, you know to get into a college. So, just thinking if we didn't have those resources that would have prevented her from having that opportunity.

The leader then went on to connect to Dr. Kendi’s argument with SATs being a gatekeeper, and decisions parents with means make that complicate achieving equity. This cognitive dilemma was between what one may do to create equity in a school for all students, but actions a parent will take for their own child.

> But, I think that's one of the big things he (Dr. Kendi) was saying last night is that the SATs are the "Great Gatekeeper," and what's their purpose. It doesn't measure a student's ability to be successful in college. And so, I think the pods. I agree with what Principal Michelle (pseudonym) says but also it's another great way. It's another way to kind of separate, and this is a more of a socioeconomic like having the money to be able to, I saw Principal Madison (pseudonym) put in there [the chat box] people are leaving right now to go to private school and you know people paying two to three thousand dollars and that that really just has to do with, with the socio-economic status of a family, you know, so I think it's a lot of things that are going to cause that disparity and how do we recover from that?

In summation, the participants' beliefs about leading for equity were consistent and for some their beliefs about leading for equity was increased after gaining a deeper understanding about inequities. The PL offered opportunity to more deeply examine their beliefs and practices related to equity. First, they were able engage in deeper self-reflection about themselves, their biases and actions. Second, they experienced cognitive dissonance when faced with the dilemma of aligning value for equity and decisions for their own family which may perpetuate inequities. Lastly, the unified recognition that the current educational responses by educators and families as a result of COVID-19 will have long-term consequences affecting equity goals.

RQ3: What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about social justice affecting current educational outcomes as a result of professional learning?

Social justice, in this study, is defined as understanding the systems of oppression and privilege, and then recognizing how these systems impact the students in the schools the administrators lead. The Culturally Proficient Leadership Survey (Hines and Kritsonis, 2008) did not specify questions that would uplift understanding systems of oppression and privilege, as the subscales in the survey are based on the essential elements of cultural proficiency. In order to examine quantitative data for social justice, items from the survey were identified by the researcher in which school administrators' practices helped to change patterns supporting the status quo.

Social Justice-Quantitative Findings

Of the 35 items in the survey, ten were determined to be social justice in this study, and four items were statistically significant. Two items supported policy changes, one staff capacity for improved academic instruction, and address hiring practices. The findings are shown in Table 29 *Social Justice Subscale Items Showing Increase Pre-and Post-Intervention*.

Table 29

Social Justice Subscale Items Showing Increase Pre-and Post-Intervention

Social Justice	Pre-intervention (*N*=24) Mean(SD)	Post-intervention (*N*=21) Mean(SD)
Q31-Providing leadership in creating policy statements that are inclusive of diversity.	3.12(.68)	3.76(.77) **
Q7-Encouraging staff to obtain certification in specifically designed academic instruction.	3.12(1.07)	3.67(1.01) *
Q23-Organizing diverse members into interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members.	2.96(1.16)	3.81(.93) **

Q33-Ensure that policies promote and advocate for culturally proficient behaviors among faculty and staff members.	3.17(.70)	3.76(.70) *

Note. *p<.05, ** p<.005

Three of the items, Q31- Providing leadership in creating policy statements that are inclusive of diversity, Q7-Encouraging staff to obtain certification in specifically academic instruction, and Q33-Ensure that policies promote and advocate for culturally proficient behaviors among faculty and staff members, moved from a 3 rating (*sometimes uses*) closer to a 4 rating (*frequently uses*). In the pre-intervention survey, item Q23- Organizing diverse members into interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members, had *n*=10 (42%) report either a 2 (*rarely uses*) *n*=8 and two people report a 1 (*never uses*). Post-intervention resulted in the majority of the participants n=14 (67%) rating this a 4 (*frequently uses*) and above 5 (*always uses*). The participation in the study raised the awareness and practices of school administrators to help disrupt the disrupt the status quo in hiring people who are already in the majority in education, which is White female teachers.

Social Justice-Increased Understanding on Systemic Barriers

In order to situate the leader in the center of their learning, reflective conversations and prompts were given to the leaders after the PL session with the Just the Facts simulation game. When the game was recently redesigned for a digital setting, the game creator added situations that people have experienced during COVID-19. As a result, the simulation highlighted multiple systemic barriers for characters outside of the dominant culture normed around White, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual, middle-class people. Conversely, other characters were given privileges, agency, and opportunities with social identifiers closer to the dominant culture. The participants had to select characters in the simulation whose social identifiers were furthest from their own reality. For example, a Black female administrator could select a White gay male, a

White administrator could be a Muslim disabled woman, and a Cisgender administrator could take on a transgender persona, etc. As the game progressed, the participants would lose or gain things based on barriers or opportunities given to the different characters. The various types of systemic barriers were: (a) racial discrimination, (b) housing discrimination, (c) medical discrimination, (d) ageism, (e) environmental racism, (f) poverty, (g) gender-based workplace inequities, (h) income inequities, and (i) lack of educational opportunities. With the range of systemic barriers presented in the game, the participants identified the impact of intersectionality for systems of oppression, as this participant stated: "This makes me question and wonder how the people who live these intersectionalities manage to keep trying, to get up each day and not be constantly consumed by anger at the unfairness." Another administrator stated her commitment to increase her understanding of intersectional issues in order to be a better ally. Her commitment is illuminated in the quotation below.

> I need a much deeper knowledge and understanding to be an ally. Specifically, working to become a better ally to women of color and also, LGBTQ+ people of color. My action steps are to continue to educate myself and do a data analysis specific to this in my school data and work with a group of stakeholders to identify areas of need and what we can take action on as a school.

Transformative learning included awareness of one's emotional state during the learning process and cognitive dissonance. Participants indicated experiencing a range of emotions during the PL focused on social justice; the emotions ranged from anger, frustration, sadness, empathy, defeated, to enlightened, intrigued and validated. The participants also expressed that perspective taking and validation of personal experiences were valuable to the learning community and their

leadership. Participants voiced experiences in which they reflected on the systemic racism and their actions.

> It is necessary to continue to check yourself as the conditioning of system racism is real. I won't cross the street if I am in the city and see a person of color. These are things we have to challenge. My students are struggling because others may be seeing in a way that represents a view of systemic racism.

> It made me think of my kids, their families, and my staff. I have been guilty of blaming others with "well, if they just worked hard enough. I have since realized that hard work is not the only answer to moving forward in life….I find myself wondering about the deeper story and how we can hopefully stop whatever cycle the student and his/her family may be stuck in because usually, this is not a choice on their part.

> I think that a lot of the conversations and theories center around perseverance and/or grit with students needs to co-exist in the space that also examines historical disparities around race, class, gender, etc. and its negative impact on kids.

In the following reflection, the participant examined their own life as a Black person and the factors that protected them from systemic barriers and discrimination.

> I guess the critical thinking that I have done regarding my own experiences is what are the factors that have protected me from some of these acts of discrimination, and/or has it been happening to me, and I just did not realize it? As far as students are concerned, I think more about staff and staff actions. What things do staff (not just in my school) do

and say that aligns directly with many of these elements of discrimination. How do we get staff to recognize, and "check" themselves? What is to be done with the staff who are unwilling to take the journey and change?

As a result of participating in the study, the participants reported a greater importance in understanding systemic barriers and opportunities affecting students' educational outcomes. Changes in understanding the range of systemic barriers included historical disparities affecting the meritocracy and grit mindset. For leaders, recognizing the importance of balancing expectations of their staff with the realities of students and families of color facing systemic racism and discrimination are important to not further frustrate or invalidate their students' experiences. Next, being able to "check" oneself and supporting staff to "check" themselves for bias is another important action raised by participants. Lastly, the complexity and the intersectionality of the systemic barriers offered deeper insight into how school administrators can be better allies to their community members.

RQ4: What is the change in school administrators' culturally proficient leadership practices as a result of the professional learning?

This research question examined quantitative and qualitative findings from the data collected. First, the quantitative data were examined with the finding from a pre- and post-survey conducted before and then after the intervention. Second, the qualitative data collected after PL on different EE from the Leadership Rubric are discussed.

Quantitative Analysis Cultural Proficiency Essential Elements

An independent two-sample *t*-Test was conducted with data collected from the Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale. The first sample (n=24) included respondents who, for various reasons, did not participate in the study, but completed the survey. Table 5.2 *Descriptive*

Statistics Culturally Proficient Leadership-Pre-Intervention shows the results of the tests for normality, and the skewness -0.90 (*SE*=0.47) for the overall *M*=3.33 (*SD*=0.37), which falls within the range of normal distribution. The kurtosis 1.8 (*SE*=0.91) falls outside the range of normal distribution, but indicates uniform distribution. The tests of normality for the second sample (*n*=21) includes respondents who attended the PL for the study. These results for the tests for normality are displayed in Table 27 *Descriptive Statistics of Culturally Proficiency Leadership Survey for Participants of CP³LPL.* The skewness is 0.4 (*SE*=0.50) for the overall *M*=3.64 (*SD*=0.54) and the kurtosis is .57 (*SE*=0.97), thus indicating normal distribution. Next the aggregate means were compared and the participants completing the CP³LPL reported higher culturally proficient leadership actions (*M*=3.64, *SD*=0.54) than the respondent who either did not participate in the study, or took the survey prior to the PL (*M*=3.33, *SD*=0.37) *t*(2.21), p<.05 indicating significance.

Table 30

Descriptive Statistics of Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale for School Administrators (N=24)

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Culturally Proficient Leadership	3.33	.37	.90 (.47)	1.85 (.91)

Note. SD= Standard deviation, the standard error for skewness and kurtosis are Given in parenthesis after the scores for each.

Table 31

Descriptive Statistics of Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale for Participants of CP³LPL (*N*=21)

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Culturally Proficient Leadership	3.64	.54	.04 (.50)	.57 (.97)

Note. SD= Standard deviation, the standard error for skewness and kurtosis are Given in parenthesis after the scores for each.

The data were then analyzed to examine any changes in the subscales in the Culturally Proficiency Leadership Survey. The subscales in the survey examined Assessing Culture, Valuing Diversity, Managing Dynamics of Differences, Adapting for Diversity, Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge, and Inclusiveness. The results are shown in Table 29 *Comparison of Culturally Proficient Leadership Subscale Mean Scores Pre-and Post CP³LPL.* Four of the subscales showed statistical significance between school leaders who participated in CP³LPL than school leaders who either did not participate in the PL or completed the survey prior to participating in the PL. The results are as follows: (a) Assessing Culture, leaders post CP³LPL (M=3.63, SD=0.58) t=(1.95), $p<0.05$ of rating themselves higher than leaders pre CP³LPL (M=3.33, SD=0.37), (b) Valuing Diversity, leaders post CP³LPL (M=3.58, SD=0.58) t=(2.34), $p<0.05$ compared to leaders pre PL (M=3.23, SD=0.39), (c) Inclusiveness, post CP³LPL (M=3.70, SD=0.56) t=(2.45), $p<0.05$, were higher than pre (M=3.31, SD=0.50) and (d) Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge, post intervention (M=3.70, SD=0.56) t=(2.31), $p<.05$ as compared to pre intervention (M=3.35, SD=0.44). While the remaining two subscales, Adapting for Diversity, and Managing the Dynamics of Difference did not indicate statistical significance.

Table 32

Comparison of Culturally Proficient Leadership Subscale Mean Scores Pre-and Post CP³LPL

Culturally Proficient Leadership Subscales	Pre-Intervention (N=24) Mean (SD)	Post-Intervention (N=21) Mean (SD)
Assessing Culture	3.31 (.51)	3.63 (.58)
Valuing Diversity	3.23 (.39)	3.58 (.58)
Managing Dynamics of Difference	3.52 (.42)	3.65 (.71)
Adapting for Diversity	3.46 (.47)	3.62 (.56)
Inclusiveness	3.31 (.50)	3.70 (.56)

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge	3.35 (.44)	3.70 (.56)

Qualitative Analysis Cultural Proficiency Essential Elements

Components of the Culturally Proficiency Leadership Rubric were examined to deepen the discussion with the EE of cultural proficiency within the context of leadership. The intervention examined any changes with the leaders with the original five elements: (a) assessing culture, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing dynamics of difference, (d) adapting for change, and (e) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The findings are organized by each EE, with a definition of the EE within leadership, and then qualitative data supporting the leaders' examination of the EE.

Assessing Culture and Self. The Cultural Proficiency Leadership Rubric (Franco et al., 2011) asserts leaders who assess culture "use personal experience to develop maintain and provoke a moral imperative passion, knowledge, wisdom, diligence and courage for making positive change that benefits underserved stakeholders in schools and in the community." (p. 1 of rubric) The findings from the quantitative analysis confirm that the PL increased the leaders' practices in assessing culture, both in the schools and their own. Qualitative data exemplified how leaders have developed their fortitude from personal experience to serve their students and families.

As a Jew and as a woman, I have experienced antisemitism and workplace inequality, been a victim of mansplaining … (even last night, it was not my husband!) As a child of poverty, I feel if is other attributes that have driven me to the path I am now.

Leader Asa's (pseudonym) Poem illustrates how their personal experiences drives their actions and leadership:

I am from a loving and caring family

I am from I am brown not black

I am from being a proud African American

I am from being an Only Child, but extended Family that served as brothers, sisters, uncles, and ants (aunts)

I am from wearing a mask to make people feel comfortable

I am from the Church as My Foundation - That is why I practice forgiving & loving seven days a week, not just on Sundays

I am from Rough Side of the Mountain and My Hope Built

I am from No Running Water and No Heat

I am from at least I felt what is was like to have someone support me for me _

I am from a Family in which I was the First to Attend College

I Am From, When I graduate, They Graduate

I Am From, Bearing the Burden of Representing of an Entire Family …

I AM FROM BREAKING THE CURSE OF 400 HUNDRED YEARS OF OPPRESSION!

See Me, See Me As Fair, See Me As A Supporter, See Me As A Loving Person, See Me As A Forgiving Person, See Me As Human Being; or See Me How I See You

As a 1st grader I saved up all my money to buy a beautiful velvet and lace dress for a poor African American girl in DC so she would have a happy Christmas. I say this not to praise myself, but to show that this desire to help others, this recognition that others lead very different lives, was prewired into me and then encouraged and nurtured by my family and community. In hearing the poems from others in this study, I realized that my

> upbringing provided at least a window into the lives of some people of color. It surprised me that others did not have even this slight knowledge until they moved away from home or to (this Mid-Atlantic City). I believe that all of these elements – my personal values, where and when I grew up, my father's influence in particular (whose immigrant family was not warmly welcomed in 1915 Pennsylvania) – come together to support my determination to lead with equity.

The creative component of the PL, the poetry writing was essential for the participant to delve into their own personal journey in both their life and how this affects their leadership. Giving the participants time in both the PL and on their own time helped to increase the time and opportunity to reflect and create. Having them share with their peers increases the importance of storytelling and personal narrative. These practices are also important in social justice practices in the classroom (Stovall, 2006).

Valuing Diversity. This essential element is defined as: "leaders promote and model learning about community in authentic ways for all stakeholders so that specific cultural perspectives, issues, needs of all community groups can be better understood by all in the school community," (Franco et al., 2011, p.2 of rubric). The actions that the leaders ranged from acknowledging celebratory months to intentional practices, such as: "It is important to not shy away from the conversation and listen to our student's stories. We need to develop school that don't just celebrate diversity, but make it a daily part of who we are every day." One leader shared the relevance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in valuing diversity: "I continue to learn…We have done many things supporting students but not as much as we need to. We have done many things around HBCUs but not infused throughout the school

year." Additionally, one leader shared how the expansion of the diversity recognitions have taken on more intention:

> I take the time to acknowledge and celebrate all cultures and ethnicities within our school community. Over the past two years, I made sure we, as a school, have done something to acknowledge Hispanic Heritage Month, African American History Month, Lunar New year, Black Lives Matter Week, Women's History Month, and Pride Month via bulletin board recognitions, displays, books, media and artifacts to educate the school community.

The participants in the study shared their commitment and deeper understanding of valuing diversity. While some participants continue to use celebratory months as a vehicle to promote diversity, other participants offered ways in which they strive to make valuing diverstiy a daily practice by encouraging their staff to engage in conversations and listen to students' stories. Valuing HBCUs is another way one school administrator reports they ensure students and staff see the excellence with higher education. Through the PL participants were afforded the opportunity to expand their understanding and strategies to value diversity.

Managing the Dynamics of Differences. This element is critical for effectively leading a school towards normalizing conflict and differences, but also uplifts the voices of underserved students and examine practices. The questions in the Culturally Proficient Leadership Survey focused on strategies for conflict resolution and restorative practices. Restorative practices were identified in the reflection, discussion, and chat nine times. An administrator described the conflict with system policy and discipline form. In contrast, other administrators stated engaging in all-staff book studies on the topic of building a restorative school helped them further engage in perspective taking, but taking restorative action was still limited. In the last quotation, the

school leader shares how their commitment to restorative culture has been reaffirmed. The three quotations are below:

> Our discipline policies are punitive, the forms are punitive and until we truly embrace a restorative culture in discipline, how we run classrooms and/or speak to children and each child feels valued and a sense of belonging, we will not make progress.

> The purpose of these conversations was to try to build empathy for students, create more of a restorative school environment, and to increase staff perspective. These conversations have had mixed results; the majority of staff are willing to listen, but few implement new practices or reflect on their interactions with students as a result of the conversations.

> I believe that a critical element of my role is to fight for advocate and effect change (where I have control) to ensure that school and my school are socially just and restorative spaces, this course has reinforced and reignited that passion.

Another aspect of this element for school leaders, as defined by Franco and colleagues (2011 p. 3 of rubric), is embracing risk:

> The extent to which the leader embraces risk to make decisions and take actions, which may not be popular with dominant cultures, anticipates criticism, persists in the face of criticism, inertia, barriers or reversals, and accepts personal and professional consequences for advocating for underserved students and other stakeholders.

The qualitative data from the discussions and reflections illustrated leaders in the Mid-Atlantic district view district and community support in advocating for underserved students, but

may have to stand more firmly in how they discuss this with their staff. This quotation shares the duality of how they see it:

> I believe that risk taking is supported in our district, however this can be inhibited by the fact that we often try to please everyone in many situations (although, I think this mindset is changing). Sometimes we take the polite approach which does not do justice to addressing barriers and skirts or gives the concerns only the surface level of attention.

Another participant shared their intent to take more action with this element, and the reaction staff have had to them: "I need to do better in this area. I have recently begun to disrupt teachers who make statements with bias against children and this has produced a variety of responses with these staff (embarrassment, denial, or apology." The dynamics of the culture at the district level and one's role as assistant principal or principal was also raised as a barrier:

> I also think that in the last year there has been a s switch at the (district) level of "follow the hierarchy" where some in upper level management won't even speak to anyone more than one level "below' them. It makes it hard as an Assistant Principal, especially if your current principal isn't open to taking risks.

The following quotation offers an example of a leader caught between doing what they believed was right for students and what the district wanted to balance concerns from the community:

> I won't apologize for speaking openly about the need to do better in this area [embracing risk]. For example, I was threatened (by a parent) via email if I did not cancel Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action [a national movement to take collective action to engage in critical reflection and honest conversation in school communities to center Black lives in their classrooms, this occurs the first week of February]- I was actually

> kind of told by the district that based on that we could handle it differently- we refused as school to cancel it and I continued to engage in discussion with the family and our staff that had engaged my full support. Honestly, I've had various levels of support in taking risks, which has been frustrating at times.

The enhanced conversations around embracing risk served an important purpose for the school administrators as they were able to truthfully and courageously share the perspectives, actions, and reactions in a peer group, in order to help them normalize embracing risk to support underserved students.

Adapting to Differences. This element for culturally proficient leadership is critical to examining practices for equity: "The extent to which the leader facilitates an understanding about the truth of an organization's effectiveness in achieving equitable outcomes." (Franco et al., 2011 p.4 of rubric). The quantitative analysis of the pre-and post-survey showed evidence the increase in leadership practices was statistically significant indicating that the PL raised the importance of this element. The qualitative data expanded on the participants' practices in facilitating the understanding about equity among staff. The quotations below describe the leaders' response to their staff wanting to learn and further their school's truth:

> Many of our staff wanted to confront these implicit biases, gains and understanding and learn and grow from this experience. Through these conversations, we started to address the culture within our building, staff marginalization, and treatment of our students of color. This summer we will continue with this work; our leadership retreat will focus on building capacity within our team leaders to engage in these courageous conversations.

> I am really thinking about how the school to prison pipeline and the overrepresentation of Black and Hispanic males in the prison populations affects what the workforce looks like. We really need to examine ourselves and the impacts that are actions have on Black and Hispanic students and how that affects their futures.

The powerful undertones of inaction by a school administrator is also raised by this person's reflection: "It is equally as important to address these issues when they arise and not be complicity. We, as building leaders have to ensure students, parents, and staff are treated fairly, justly, and equitably." In summation, the participants believed confronting biases, examination of practices, and recognizing the harm of silence and inaction are ways to have truthful conversations about effectiveness in the school and organization.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. For culturally proficient leaders, this element involves stakeholders and shared decision-making as the definition from Franco and colleagues (2011) states: "The extent to which the leader communicates openly, frequently and effectively with all stakeholder groups and creates a culture of community collaboration and inclusive decision making focused on meeting the needs of underserved students and their parents/guardians." (p. 5 of rubric). Data from the qualitative data offers more insight into how the school administrators, described the importance of building culture and another describes the importance of restorative approaches:

> Culture within our school community is a priority for me- even more so than instruction. It creates the foundations for "ideal" conditions that lead to better learning. over the past three years, I have really made an effort to model and promote collaboration, cultivate relationships with stakeholders and encourage innovation in lieu of the status quo.

> I strive to have open and honest conversations with stakeholders where I can learn and carry out ideas. I have created programs and presented professional development to help support marginalized students. I implement discipline through a restorative approach. I also try to make sure that our schedule is reflective of our priorities as a school, making sure that marginalized students have access to quality teachers/instruction.

One leader even expressed the importance of the cultural proficiency leadership rubric and advocated for further institutionalization of this with leaders:

> I was very happy to see the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Rubric that was shared. I would like to see the Mid-Atlantic School District incorporate cultural proficiency standards into the evaluation models for administrators and teachers making this important work mandatory I believe this would move the district's workforce along the cultural proficiency pathway at a more accelerated pace. We cannot waste any more time. the longer we wait, the more damage we are doing to our students.

School administrators value collaboration with their stakeholders and having the culturally proficient leadership rubric guides them so they can institutionalize practices among peers. Collaboration and relationships set the foundation to build partnerships with staff and community. Transparency with setting priorities for students who are not well-served by current practices will build support for decisions and changes in practices. Ensuring all leaders are held to the same expectations through the cultural proficiency rubric will accelerate the movement toward equity and social justice.

Inclusiveness. This element, inclusiveness, was added to the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Survey by researchers Hines and Kritsonis (2008) and is defined as "the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the decision-making process…ethnically diverse make up of advisory and

decision-making committees." (p. 5). The district has identified inclusive relationships as one of the three primary focus areas in their call to action, and has defined inclusion as:

> Making sure all individuals are engaged participants in the learning environment and community. All students, families, and staff members feel valued, respected, appreciated and involved. Individual see their unique identities reflected in all facets of education including staffing, curriculum, instruction and activities.

Evidence from the conversations regarding inclusiveness by school administrators ranged from on honoring diverse perspectives of the school community and still engaging everyone in a common goal, to building decision-making committees in a strategic manner. These examples are described in the quotations below:

> I believe that people want what they believe best for their student (s). While we might not always agree (with families) about what the best is and/or what it looks like, we are partners in this common goal. I also believe that children come to us as they are and that they are worthy and should be provide the opportunity to be themselves, learn, grow, and thrive. Our charge as educators is to make this possible for all, which starts with honoring their dignity as human beings.

> Find people's strengths and give them 110% support in that direction. So, if we have folks who want to lead DEI [Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion] work then put them in space where they can lead DEI work with again maybe a little bit of structure maybe a little bit of vision, hopefully, hopefully there's a clear vision so that if there's something that feels off the rails, we can always say hey, how does that align to the vision. If it doesn't, then we should, you know, make it do that. Um, but yeah, if people are energetic around it. It's great to space and get out of the way…So the three DEILs [Diversity, Equity, &

Inclusion Liaisons] are going to sit on the school improvement committee that committee is chaired by two other people. Now we've got five people leading, and this week we're going to throw out the committee membership volunteer opportunities to the staff so we'll get that whole committee up and running. We have brought together that DEI coalition with our TDL [Teacher Development Liaisons] our PDS [Professional Development School] coordinator, and our SIT [School Improvement Team] committee chairs for a professional learning, we're calling them the professional learning Dream Team. And so that's the team that's creating our professional learning plan to drive the work, moving forward so that'll be integrated. We'll have hopefully the idea is that our initiatives will be aligned through our membership in the restorative justice cohort. All the DEIL work will be embedded into the school improvement plan.

Inclusiveness is an essential element that is relevant and important to culturally proficient leadership. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings from the study provide evidence of inclusive leadership practices. The intervention, CP^{3}LPL provided the structure for school administrators to learn from each other about specific ways in which they are building collaborative decision-making committees to increase inclusiveness and school improvement plan to embed the diversity, equity, and inclusion work throughout their school.

In summation, both the quantitative and qualitative data corresponding to RQ4, substantiate changes in the participants culturally proficient leadership practices. The quantitative data collected from the pre- and post-survey provided statically significant increases in four of the six EE analyzed in the study. The four EE's that increased are, assessing self and culture, valuing diversity, inclusiveness, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The analysis of the qualitative data further substantiated evidence of changes from the participant through their

participation in the CP^{3}LPL intervention. The analysis of both data sets offers confirmation of changes in all six EE of culturally proficient leadership practice.

Conclusion

This study provides a research foundation to develop professional learning for school administrators based on the principles of transformative learning and designed to support culturally proficient practices. Perspective taking and growing through discomfort were themes throughout the examination of one's racial identity development. Black administrators had an opportunity to reflect and voice to their colleagues how they had to minimize aspects of their identity to lead, while White administrators gained more insight into the privilege and how this affects their leadership. Both groups expressed a greater understanding of racial identity development and how this affects their students, and possible conflicts in the schools. As administrators examined their roles as gatekeepers or gate-openers to upper level coursework, they also examined their own implicit bias and their roles in the schools to discuss implicit bias. Many participants described confronting cognitive dissonance as they reflected on what they do to benefit their own children, which may uphold the status quo. The growth through discomfort was an essential learning piece in the PL. The school administrators also expressed the need to have these conversations with their staff, and having the PL to reflect and engage in the conversations first helped to increase their self-efficacy to lead these conversations. Modeling authenticity and vulnerability to connect is a theme identified in this study to support leadership for equity, cultural competence and social justice.

The ongoing PL created a community of trust, a culture of valuing equity, and a focus on courageous conversations which supported the development of collective efficacy. The PL offered a learning environment in which the school administrators discussed their values and

expressed the range of emotions they felt around the inequities surfacing during COVID-19 and the impacts of systemic racism. As they were able to discuss their experiences and leadership, they developed collective efficacy towards culturally proficient leadership practices by building school administrator networks, which is essential for principal collective efficacy. Additionally, by unlearning and relearning about historical and current systemic barriers affecting education, such as income and environmental inequities, and housing discrimination through redlining, participants stated they gained a deeper understanding of multiple layers of systemic racism and how these affect outcomes for student groups in their schools. This awareness gave leaders an opportunity to gain greater understanding and take actions such as checking oneself for implicit bias and supporting their staff in understanding and surfacing bias.

Lastly, professional learning designed for school administrators supports collective efficacy in changes with culturally proficient leadership practices. Principals do not have another person in their school with the same role. Assistant principals, depending on the size of the school, or may or may not have another assistant principal at their school. To create a network of school administrators, it is important to create on-going trusting learning communities with more people who have the same roles in the district. Both quantitative and qualitative data provided evidence of changes in practices in all of the EE elements of culturally proficient leadership practices. Statistically significant increases in the EE were supported for assessing culture and self, adapting for diversity, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, and inclusiveness, however the analysis of both data sets support changes in all six EE, which includes managing for the dynamics of difference and adapting for difference.

Self-awareness, or an inside-out approach to leadership, is an important to culturally proficient leadership. Participants assessed themselves their racial identity development and

shared in discussions and reflections their own experiences in the various stages of the HIRIM. Through the PL school administrators also identified ways in which they adapted their practices for equity and inclusiveness, which supported collective efficacy. School administrators also stated their commitment and ways in which they engaged staff in the dialogues about inequity, and ways in which the school could address barriers within the school.

The qualitative data described how leaders discussed their experiences with valuing diversity and managing the dynamics of differences. Participants shared ways in which their schools were going beyond heroes and celebrations when valuing diversity and shifting to integrating both changes in the curriculum and learning to listen more so students can bring their authentic selves into the classroom. With managing the dynamics of difference, some administrators shared honestly in discussions about the resistance they face from staff when discussing implicit bias and systemic racism.

In summary, findings from this study indicate how professional learning is implemented is as important as the content delivered in the PL and argues for transformative learning processes when engaging leaders. This study offered innovative activities that can be implemented in digital learning environments. Using video platforms for virtual sessions, shorter videos to promote discussion, online Google Forms to submit reflections, and modifying content delivery for the virtual platform were all important to this study. While the virtual format provided the opportunity for innovation, the transformative experiences that provided the opportunity for critical self-reflection, cognitive dissonance, and discussion were as important as the content to understand racial identity, equity, and social justice.

Discussion

This section summarizes the findings from the study and connects the findings to current literature on transformative learning and culturally proficient leadership. The discussion first examines the three components of transformative learning within the PL and what components of the PL supported transformative learning. Next, the discussion is framed around the Essential Elements (EE) of culturally proficiency leadership. Lastly, the discussion examines the findings in the Bronfenbrenner EST model, the theoretical foundation for this study.

Transformative learning design increases cultural competence, equity, and social justice. In Chapter Three the relevance of transformative learning experiences was argued as relevant for adult leaning and the intervention, CP^3LPL specifically designed transformative learning experiences focused on equity, cultural competence, and social justice. Each component of the design addressed one or more of the three areas to move culturally proficient leadership practices. To engage the participants in the three aspects of transformative learning, described as (a) disorienting experience or cognitive dissonance, (b) critical self-reflection, and (c) seeing distortions in one's beliefs or worldview (Mezirow et al., 2000). The design of the PL offered for transformative learning for cultural competence through self-reflection prompts focused on racial identity development and the identity poem, the experiential game simulation, and film engaged the participants in a deeper understanding and disorienting simulation with social justice. Equity was examined through via the Affinity Fishbowl activity and videos challenging participants to engage in discomfort which led to personal insight and growth. All of these experiences captured the participants' commitment and practices for cultural competence, and leadership for equity and social justice. Further examination of the transformative learning components is discussed next.

*Cognitive dissonance***.** The term cognitive dissonance refers to a disorienting dilemma a person experiences when they examine their perspectives because they are faced with different information that does not fit with their own experiences or expectations. Several participants described experiencing cognitive dissonance at different times during the PL. For one participant who identified as Black, their dilemma centered around questioning experiences of discrimination: "…what are the factors that have protected me from some of these acts of discrimination, and/or has it been happening to me and I just did not realize it?" Another participant described this dilemma centering around discomfort: "…it is challenging to learn how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable and when you have others challenge your thinking. It makes me want to back away…but I have to learn how to maneuver through that discomfort/shame/guilt." This final excerpt connects the cognitive dissonance experienced with one of the activities created for this PL, and a change in their actions.

> I initially felt uncomfortable being in the White Affinity Fishbowl; I did not want to do it and was worried about coming across as naïve and uniformed. I was working that I was going to offend the people of color in the group, but I decided to be honest and own my experiences.

The cognitive dissonance experienced by some participants in the PL was essential for transformative learning. While some participants expressed a discomfort with the dissonance they also recognized the importance to examine why they were experiences cognitive dissonance and stay engaged with the PL. The participants in this PL established with the group and thus were more willing to explore their cognitive dissonance. Next the relevance of critical self-reflection in CP^{3}LPL is explored.

*Critical self-reflection***.** In adult learning, the critical self-reflection is important for learners to make meaning of their learning and to raise awareness of their own biases, beliefs, and assumptions (Collay, 2014; Guerra et al., 2013; Santamaria, 2014). For leaders, this opportunity to self-reflect is relevant for their learning and subsequent leadership. All of the participants (*N*=21) in the study agreed that the PL offered the opportunity to reflect on their actions for equity, cultural competence, and social justice, with 85% (*n*=17) rating the opportunity as "strongly agreeing" they were provided with the opportunity to self-reflect. The theme of learning and growing was expressed from a few participants: "It [the PL] allowed me to reflect on my leadership actions and what changes I need to make, or what I am doing well in this area. There is always room to grow." Similarly, another participant expressed the following:

> I continue to reinforce who much I have to learn and grow as an individual and a professional. For my students and community- I also continue to build my awareness that I truly have to be incredibly mindful and incredibly intentional about not regressing or settling into a comfort zone.

While another participant expressed how the reflection continued after the PL and an increase their awareness of their emotional state caused by the PL. During the CP^3LPL, White participants engaged in discussion about White privilege as Black participants observed and then reflected back what they heard in the discussion. This quotation describes their critical reflection and cognitive dissonance from the experience:

> The Affinity Fishbowl evoked raw emotions. I found myself highly emotional from hearing responses and feeling judged by my own emotions. I read into facial expressions when the expressions may not have been about me. The activity became highly personal for me. I have reflected for days now and cannot really drill down the why. Is it guilt -

guilt for not knowing what others have gone through in life? Is it empathy - empathy for those that have been harmed by just the color of their skin? Is it lack of knowledge...? I just do not know, but the activity left me hurt and more confused.

Lastly, reflections from the Hoffman Integrated Racial Identity Model (HIRIM) (Singh, 2019) provided data from the participants on the examination of their own assumptions, biases, and beliefs on racial identity through the written responses to the reflective prompts and discussions in the sessions. During the intervention, two reflection prompts specifically invited the participants to reflect on the HIRIM, the reflection prompts were the following: (a) Session 1 Reflection, examining the Hoffman Integrated Racial Identity Model, reflect and write times in which you recall experiences in the different points on the model, and (b) Session 3 Reflection, Reflecting on the Hoffman Integrated Racial Identity Model, what connections are you making to your own development? To your students?

As we were completing this activity yesterday I started to think about something. I just recently married a man that is of Mexican heritage and I will be taking his last name. I am wondering with this new last name, will I start to experience any negative effects just due to my last name and not to who I am as a person.

At my prior school, (White woman middle class principal at a predominantly Black and Hispanic population, school with high SES needs) I began to truly analyze and understand my privilege. I became very open and stated in orientations and such-that I was not owed anyone's trust or respect because someone they didn't know had given me the title- that is was truly on me as their leader to earn it in whatever ways they needed me to…I worked to "check myself and my experiences at the door" every single day to

try to ensure that I worked to view every single situation and need outside of the singular lens of my own experience.

The ability to push myself more into the Integrative Awareness space, working collectively with my white colleagues towards a common goal (our students). This would include teaching our students to engage in courageous conversations around race where they can respect a diverse perspective without losing a sense of self.

I think I am currently between retreat and emergence. Last week I was so angry at all the injustices that are occurring because I am understanding White Privilege. I am frustrated with my white friends who don't see it. I am frustrated with my church because I feel that what they are doing is performative and not substantial. As far as my students go, I feel like I will listen more to them and watch more closely to make sure intentional and unintentional micro and macroaggressions aren't happening to them. I will start using my voice to lift up their concerns, even if it makes teachers feel uncomfortable. (I would do this in a private setting, not in front of the students).

Providing opportunities for self-reflection in PL for equity, cultural competence, and social justice is important for self-awareness and for changes in leadership practices in those three areas. School administrators have been promoted to their roles because they are effective in leading schools. Reflecting on who they are, results in changes in their cultural competence. As a result of the cultural competence reflections, participants were guided to reflect on how they lead. The critical self-reflection on how they lead offers the opportunity to affect movement in

their schools for equity and social justice. The last piece of transformative learning, seeing distortions in worldviews is discussed next.

*Seeing distortions in worldviews***.** The last aspect of transformative learning is seeing distortions in one's beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews. Increasing intercultural awareness (Pernell-Arnold & Finley, 2012) and gaining insight into societal issues (Frederick et al, 2010) were both confirmed in this study. Many participants expressed how the PL provided opportunities in the discussions to gain insights from their peers. This quotation expresses a shift in worldview based on skin color: "...it let me see them in a different light. It allowed me to see that the color of someone's skin may impact them more than I realized." The following two quotations offer insight into a practice in listening that affects their leadership practice: "I think that listening is challenging because I felt like we are trained to listen to respond more than listen to understand," and "This PD made me think about who I am as a leader and what some of my barriers are. It allowed me to listen to others and what they bring to the job." The activities chosen for the PL also increased this aspect of transformative learning. The game simulation *Just the Facts* and the Affinity Fishbowl were both described as an impetus for being able to see distortions. The perspective-taking afforded in *Just the Fact*, when taking a character very different from the participants lived experience, was based on oppressive barriers face by characters facing intersectional identities. The perspective taking helped to see distortions in worldviews and increase empathy. Empathy was further increased when sharing personal experiences of White privilege and internalized racism expressed by colorism in BIPOC communities. While school administrators may have had cognitive knowledge of systemic racism and barriers, to engage in an experience that affected them emotionally helped to transform their worldview. The quotations below illustrate the distortions in worldview:

To play this game with individual that face obstacle everyday of their life due to the color of their skin saddened me. I wanted to scream. I wondered juts wondered if for one day I could authentically walk in their shoes. I know no matter what, I could not because my mind already has notions of life in how I was raised with those who surround me.

Witnessing the fishbowl made me more aware of the issue of colorism. I knew of this issue but did not realize the impact that it had on people of color, to the point in which some people were not able to talk about it in the moment. This was eye-opening to me.

Colorism is an issue within many communities of color, however the topic not often discussed with people outside of the community. Colorism is the hierarchy of skin color ranking lighter skin color above skin tones with browner hues is a global issue rooted in White Supremacy culture. (Hunter, 2007). This issue affects African Americans, Latinx, and Asian American communities both in the U.S. and countries of origin outside of the U. S. As a researcher of South Asian origin, I was aware of my positionality in introducing this topic because of my own experiences with colorism and the prevalence of colorism in the South Asian culture. In my facilitation of the experience I had a deeper understanding of the pain caused by color hierarchy within one's community. Talking about colorism can resurface pain and trauma responses. One person said this was too much to discuss, "I'm gonna say that video was a lot….You know, about what internalized racism means. Yeah, I don't know that probably about all I can say right now. That's a lot." Another participant agreed and stated, "It just sparks a whole other level of emotion in the conversation…but mother taught me to be confident in my own skin color, but you know your peers, can less than, you know kind…use it as a pun of a joke."

Raising the topic of internalized racism and colorism was important for two reasons, vulnerability and understanding how students are affected by colorism. It was important to create a situation in which the Black participants engaged in a conversation in which they that could be as vulnerable as the participants' discussion White Privilege. Emotions expressed by both groups were anger, pain, sadness, and concerns about what the people outside of the fishbowl were thinking listening in. While this is important, as a researcher who has also experienced colorism and racism, it was important to me to nurture healing and not exploit their pain for this study. The statement I made at the end of the fishbowl that summed up my reasons for sharing the video and my commitment to their healing.

> I also want people to know that I didn't choose those lightly. I didn't choose it just to get a reaction. I myself went through a lot of pain with colorism because that's also something in the Indian community. So, I'm also hearing the pain. I also understand that not many people know about this, who are outside of communities of color…If there's things that I can do to support you, if there's harm that's been done, I want to circle back later to talk through that. So, I just want to put that into the space as well.

The participants in the BIPOC fishbowl also shared ways in which staff can help change the narrative around students of color seeing themselves in the curriculum and who they see as trusted adults in the schools.

> What do we need to change in our school for students of color to feel their dignity is honored? It's presenting the positivity, that doesn't happen in every space, including in our curriculum. Sharing about us being kings and queens, before we were enslaved people. It's including pictures of people of color, in our literature that shares our stories so that our kids can tap into who they are. It goes back also to our hiring practices and I

know that we have as a school system and hope as individual administrators we're working on that increasing our diversity in our schools and our workforce. When I think about, even my couple of years at a Mid-Atlantic Middle School which it had a high percentage of Asians. In my second year, my assistant principal, she's Korean, and she told me stories of kids coming up to her like you're Korean like me, right, like so many of our kids don't get to see themselves in the people in our building.

Leadership who engage in transformative learning are willing to be aware of their emotional state, to see distortions in their worldview, and be willing to reflect on what they are experiencing. The topics of cultural competence, equity, and social justice, affect each person in the U.S. and across the globe. In order for leadership to examine how they have been affected, they should engage in transformative learning experiences to inform their leadership practices. This will result in authentic leadership practices rather than transactional leadership practices. As stated in earlier in chapter four, a study with preservice leaders established the relevance of transformative learning experiences for both Black and White to positively address cultural and educational concerns (Brown, 2006); the findings in this study further substantiates the need for transformative learning for school administrators.

Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory (EST). The EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) is the theoretical foundation for the study, and findings from the study are connected back to the nested systems of this model. The conceptual framework in Chapter Three focused on the microsystem, mesosystem, and the exosystem for this study. The outer layer of the EST is the macrosystem and is the socio-political context, the norms, economics, and values of a society, was not identified in the intervention, however several pieces in the macrosystem are identified in this study. In this section, the findings are discussed from the outer most later, macrosystem, then the

exosystem, which are systems affecting leaders more locally, then mesosystems, which are the interactions between the microsystem, and lastly the microsystem, the system closest to the inner core of the school administrator.

Macrosystem-BLM, Inequities, COVID-19. The macrosystem affected several aspects of the study. The emergency closing of schools and businesses due to the life-threatening virus COVID-19 amplified the economic and health disparities for their school families. School administrators learned first-hand how this was affecting families in their schools. Several participants shared how the murder of George Floyd by a police officer and subsequent marches in support of Black Lives Matter (BLM) increased their awareness to the second pandemic of systemic racism. Many of the school administrators believed part of their role is to support holding conversations about race and racism. Also of importance in the macrosystem is the deeper awareness gained by participants to the laws and policies that have upheld systemic barriers and opportunities. Learning about redlining, health disparities, and income disparities from a personal perspective increased engagement, but also helped to increase knowledge on these issues.

Exosystem-local policy, district priorities, and support. The exosystem is the second outer system in the nested model, and in this study encompassed the district conditions for support, policies affecting motivation, and professional standard. The participants expressed district level support to engage in deeper conversations about race, additional urgency from the superintendent, and understanding that a new policy will codify the implementation of equity across the district. While the alignment of the PL to the professional standards were advertised in the recruitment flyer for the study, the motivation to participate in the study was not based on

compliance, but rather the participants' genuine motivation to engage in the topics offered in the PL.

Mesosystem-collective efficacy for culturally proficient leadership. Relationships are important for collective efficacy and for school administrators, attending to relationships and trust are essential for transformative learning. The conceptual framework for the intervention identified transformative learning experiences as the starting point for leaders to engage in their critical self-reflections and develop principal efficacy, and then collective efficacy for culturally proficient leadership. While this is true for in individual growth for leaders, the participants also identified the opportunity to connect with other school leaders as important the self-reflections. The time invested in each PL session to connect and develop trust helped to co-create the trusting leaning environment to be vulnerable, practice engaging in dialogues on racial identity, racism, systemic barriers, and resistance from staff when trying to engage them on these topics. The trust building and time to practice discussion in the PL helped to develop the collective efficacy of the group. Relationships were brought up by several school administrators as an important value and PL for adults has to create opportunities to develop relationships. School administrators also benefitted from hearing how other school administrator engaged in culturally proficient leadership practices and this also supported collective efficacy. Balancing both individual transformative learning and building the foundation with a learning community in order to support collect learning and collective efficacy were elucidated in this study, and helped to increase culturally proficient leadership practices.

Microsystem-racial identity development and perspective taking. The findings of the PL connected most with the microsystem of the school administrators in the EST model. The leaders examined their own racial development and how their own life and educational experiences

affected their current leadership. Additionally, the reflection over the course of the leader's life aligned with the chronosystem of the EST. The focused self-reflections provided transformative learning experiences which helped to surface bias, perspective-taking and motivation to lead for equity and social justice.

In conclusion, data collected from the participants supported the EST model for school administrators participating in this study. The unanticipated circumstances for the dual pandemic happening during the intervention only amplified the relevance and importance of understanding the macrosystem in which the participants, and even the researchers are in during the time of the study. Future research can continue to build on changes in the macrosystem, as this time period has become a part of the chronosystem of everyone living during the time of a global pandemic.

Limitations

This study has four limitations. First, the small sample *(n*=21) size for the study. While the sample size for qualitative data collections was substantial, the small sample size for the quantitative findings are a limitation. With a school administrator population (*N*=180), the G Power analysis calculated sample size of 45 participants for an effect size of 0.5. Had more time been available to recruit participants and to conduct the intervention over a school semester rather than over the summer, participation may have increased. The needs assessment for this study recruited a higher number of participants (*n*=112) after three requests for participation. Second, the study is focused in only one school district, so the findings are specific to one district and not the state or region of the Mid-Atlantic. However, the student demographics of the district are similar to suburban and urban districts with student populations with over 50% identifying other than White, but the school administration identifying predominantly as White. As a result, the findings are generalizable to districts that prioritize equity, cultural competence, and social

justice to address disparities in opportunities gaps. Third, the study included both principals and assistant principals. While both roles are leaders within a school, the power dynamics of principals having greater positional power within a school than the assistant principals is a limitation in this study. Lastly, the quantitative and qualitative data were all self-reported by the participants, which offers insight into the participants' perceptions, but did not gain insight into the experiences of the staff or students in the schools led by the participants. Therefore, researchers should consider the limitation when interpreting the finding of this study.

Recommendations for Practice

The finding and analysis from this study elucidated seven recommendations for practice. The recommendations are framed around increasing awareness and or knowledge of the participants, such as increasing self-reflection and increasing understanding about systemic barriers and privilege, to skills building, which are practicing conversations on race and racism, discussing culturally proficient leadership practices, and lastly, processes for developing and leading PL for school administrators on cultural competence, equity, and social justice. The recommendations are discussed next and start with recommendations to build awareness, then knowledge, then skills, and finally for PL for these topics.

Awareness-Ongoing critical self-reflection for leaders. Leaders engaging in on-going critical self-reflection about their practices are more likely to change their practices. The study supports the desire and need for self-reflection on leadership practices. Self-reflections connecting life experiences and racial identity affecting leadership were also powerful for leaders to identify their beliefs and practices for cultural competence, equity, and social justice.

Knowledge-Developing deep understanding about systemic barriers and privilege. The education most educators received about the history in the U.S. was incomplete and biased

from a White, male, Christian, heteronormative perspective. Systemic barriers and privileges are embedded into laws, societal norms, and policies. The more our school administrator can unlearn and relearn our history with a critical lens, the more equipped they are to be effective instructional leaders for their staff and culturally proficient leaders for the school community.

Knowledge-Culturally proficient leadership. The culturally proficient leadership rubric provides leaderships practices that support cultural competence, equity, and social justice. Engaging school administrator to read and discuss the rubric with questions focused in each of the EE for cultural proficiency provides opportunities for focused discussion on practice. This is a more manageable way to take a comprehensive leadership rubric, and pinpoint discussions to focus on different aspects of culturally proficient leadership.

Skills-Practicing conversations about race and racism to lead staff. School leaders are expected to lead their staff towards social justice in a culturally competent manner. Most have never been taught how to do this or examine their racial identity development. The focus on anti-racism work in schools requires school leaders to learn very quickly how to effectively facilitate conversations on race and racism. Creating safe learning communities for school administrators to engage in these conversations themselves will help build their self-efficacy to lead conversations with their staff.

Process-School administrator professional learning cohorts. Professional learning communities are essential for effective professional learning and school administrator will benefit from smaller learning communities. Building trust and relationships with the cohort over several learning sessions will create a learning cohort specific to the learning community who are often one or few in their roles at their schools. Additionally, three schools had all of their

members of their administrative team participate in the study. Having administrative teams participate together could also be beneficial.

Process-Innovative professional learning to meet learning interests. The circumstances of conducting the intervention during a pandemic demanded shifting from face-to-face professional learning to an online format, as a result innovation was required. The Community of Inquiry Framework (CoI) was used to ensure the online offering was modeled on evidence-informed practices. The innovation was ensuring social, cognitive, and teaching presence with content related to equity, cultural competence, and social justice, thus the selection of materials had to meet the changes with an online medium. Next, to create spaces in which participants authentically engaged in discussion that could be uncomfortable to discuss, a blending of two processes, an Affinity Group, and Fishbowl, was developed. Lastly, use creative processes for adults to express connect their identity and leadership. The I Am poems are an example of taking an activity and innovating it for a new group.

Process-Expert facilitation with the CP3LPL. Facilitating professional learning on topics of cultural competence, equity, and social justice, requires expertise in facilitation. The researcher for this study also has over a decade of facilitating professional learning with school teams, government agencies, and nonprofit community members. Anticipating and being able to hold the space with highly emotional responses, helping guide participants in practicing Brave Space Agreements for difficult conversations, and quickly responding to the group needs rather than attending to the agenda some of the components of expert facilitation. Future research should ensure the facilitation of CP^{3}LPL is with facilitations with several years of experience with these topics.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should continue to build on both the quantitative and qualitative findings to further develop PL that supports school administrators with their culturally proficient leadership. To bolster the quantitative data, collecting data from the staff from which the school administrators lead will offer additional insight into understanding how the staff perceive the school administrators' culturally proficient practices compared with how school administrators report their practices. The survey, Culturally Proficient Leadership Survey (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008) used in this study can be adapted to gain the staff perspective of their administrators. Expanding the study to other diverse school district and increasing the data collected from the population are two additional recommendations for future research. Expanding the administration of the survey to staff and school administrator, and increasing the number of school districts invited to participate in the study are to recommendations to support the generalizability of the findings.

Recommendations for qualitative research are to gather more in-depth data from participants and expanding the research team. Individual interviews, and Affinity focus groups will offer additional opportunities to collect rich data to the experiences and practices of the school administrators. The interviews and focus groups can be with the participants in the study and randomly selected staff members who work in the school of the school administrators in the study. Future research could narrow the participants to either principals or assistant principals to gain further insight into the experiences of each role with culturally proficient leadership practices. Lastly, a larger research team would support the dependability of the results from qualitative data collection.

Policy Recommendations

Three policy recommendations are put forth to support culturally proficient leadership practices in school administrators in order to increase their cultural competence, understanding about social justice, and agency to lead for equity. The first recommendation is a requirement for high quality professional learning on culturally responsive practices for all school administrators. Second is hiring educators who value and embody culturally proficient practices. Lastly is a state requirement to include courses on equity and cultural responsiveness for in the regulations to become school administrators. The recommendations are detailed next.

The first policy recommendation is to require high quality professional learning on culturally responsive practices that embeds transformative learning within the design of the PL for all principals and assistant principals in the Mid-Atlantic district. The professional learning on culturally responsive practices should be mandatory for all current school administrators. The system can implement a three-year plan to ensure the school administrators engage in small group professional learning cohorts that continues and becomes a peer community. Any new hires to school administration coming from outside of the district must join a cohort of new administrators to engage in the PL on culturally responsive practices. This cycle will continue as school administrators are hired within and outside of the system. In addition, the system-wide school administrator meetings should focus on discussing the Educational Equity Policy standards and school-based plans to effectively implement the policy, as the policy was voted into action after the completion of this study.

The second policy recommendation addresses the hiring of school administrators who value and embody culturally proficient leadership practices. Interview questions should include questions in which potential candidates can share examples of their awareness of an inside out

awareness approach to cultural competence. This can include an example of how their own racial identity may influence their leadership or an understanding of how people from different racial identities may perceive them. It is also important during the interview for candidates to share whether they value and demonstrate equity and social justice in their leadership. Being able to understand policies that support equity, having a deeper understanding of systemic racism, and being willing to speak on those topics demonstrates the potential school administrator's commitment to culturally proficient leadership practices. In addition to the hiring process, the district can show a commitment to increase the racial diversity in their school administrator workforce. This can be accomplished in two ways. First, by talent-spotting and increasing mentoring among current teachers of color interested in school administration. Teachers who are currently engaging and/or leading conversations on race and racism, demonstrating self-reflective practices with their instruction, effectively creative restorative classrooms, and who are engaging in current professional learning on anti-racism, racial equity, and cultural proficiency to change their practices are the culturally proficient leaders in the near future. Second, strengthening the partnerships with HBCUs leadership preparation cohorts for BIPOC educators. Additionally, purposely recruiting BIPOC school administrators from other district by uplifting the commitment the district has to equity, cultural competence, and social justice.

The last policy recommendation is to change the requirements in the state to include courses on equity and cultural responsiveness for those interested in attaining certification to become school administrators. Currently the state's requirement to become a principal or assistant principal does not require any coursework in the areas of equity or cultural responsiveness, which are detailed in the evaluations for principals (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). In summation, the three policy recommendations offer both

immediate-short-term and distal-long-term policy options to support school administrators in leading for equity in a culturally proficient manner. Through these policy recommendations, school districts can further develop leadership who are leading their diverse student population with their heart, minds, and actions.

References

Appendix A

Examining Leadership Preparation and Professional Development Towards Equitable and Culturally Proficient Actions in a Mid-Atlantic School System

Online Survey

Principal Investigator: Dr. Wendy Osefo, Assistant Professor, School of Education

Student Investigator: Razia Kosi, Doctoral Student, School of Education

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The purpose of this research study is to assess whether leadership preparation and cultural proficiency professional development increases leadership support for equity, social justice, and culturally competent environments.

The population of K-12 principals and assistant principals is 180, we anticipate a sample of 140. All participants will be from the same suburban school district.

Procedures:

There will be one component of this study:

1. An online survey will be sent to all school-based principals or assistant principals to assess leadership preparedness for social justice cultural competence, and equity; participation in cultural proficiency professional development after becoming an administrator; and current level of skill and confidence with leading for social justice, cultural competence and equity. (15 minutes)

Time Requirement:

Survey- 10 minutes

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS:

There are no anticipated risks to participants.

BENEFITS:

An examination of the results of this study will increase understanding of the influence of professional development on leadership efficacy (skill and confidence) towards leading social justice, cultural competence, and equity for students and staff. This understanding may help promote a more inclusive school environment, supportive of students' sense of belonging and development of strong student-teacher relationships.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

Your participation in this study is voluntary and the choice is completely yours to participate or not. You will indicate your consent to participate by signing the form below. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalties against you, nor will you lose any benefits to which you would be otherwise entitled. You can end your participation in the study at any time, without penalty or loss of benefits and not continuing with the survey after beginning can be withdrawal from the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of Johns Hopkins University Homewood Review Board and officials from government agencies such as the Office for Human Research Protections. (All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential.) Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see records. No identifiable information will be included in any reports of the research published or

provided to the school system. A participant number will be assigned to all surveys. Surveys will be collected in electronic or paper format. Survey data completed electronically will be collected via a password protected Google account that belongs to Mid-Atlantic School System. If you are unable to complete the survey electronically then a paper copy will be provided. In both electronic and paper format, these data will not include identifiable information.

All research data including paper surveys will be kept in a locked office. Electronic data will be stored on Razia Kosi's computer, which is password protected. Any electronic files will be erased and paper documents shredded, ten years after collection.

COMPENSATION:

Individuals will not receive any payment or compensation for participating in this study.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

If you have any questions about this research study at any time during the study, contact Dr. Osefo email, wosefo@jhu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or feel you have not been treated fairly, please call the Homewood Institutional Review Board at Johns Hopkins University at (410) 516-6580

By proceeding to the next section, you are agreeing to participate in this needs assessment.

1. How many years have you been an educator?
   - o Under 10 years
   - o 11-20 years
   - o 21-30 years
   - o Over 31 years
2. How many years have you been at HCPSS?
   - o Under 2 years
   - o 3- 10 years
   - o 11-20 years
   - o 21-30 years
   - o Over 31 years
3. What is your current role?

- o Principal
- o Assistant Principal

4. How many years have you been in your current role?
   - o Under 2 years
   - o 3- 10 years
   - o 11-20 years
   - o 21-30 years
   - o Over 31 years
5. How many years have you been in your current role at your school?
   - o Under 2 years
   - o 3- 10 years
   - o 11-20 years
   - o 21-30 years
   - o Over 31 years

6. School Level
   - o Elementary
   - o Middle
   - o High
7. Level of Education for Leadership Preparation **Original Question*
   - o Masters Certificate
   - o Masters
   - o Doctorate
   - o Other

7. Level of Education for Leadership Preparation * **Revised Question** -The rationale for this change is to use the Master's level certification required by the state level regulations for becoming a principal or assistant principal.
   - o Masters + ANS Certificate
   - o Masters + 30
   - o Doctorate
   - o Other
8. What is your gender identity?

_____

9. What is your Racial or Ethnic Identity?

_____

10. In your leadership preparation did you take courses in the following: (Check all that apply)
    - o Cultural Competence
    - o Equity
    - o Social Justice
    - o None of the above
11. In your leadership preparation, did you have coursework in the following: (Check all that apply)
    - o Cultural Competence
    - o Equity
    - o Social Justice

- o None of the Above

12. What other topics or classes did you take in your leadership preparation that helped your leadership in schools with diverse populations? *Original

_____

13. What other topics or classes did you take in your leadership preparation that helped your lead towards equitable school environments? *Original

_____

12. What other topics or classes helped you prepare for schools with diverse populations (at the university/college level)? * **Revised question -**The rationale for this change was to communicate to the survey taker that the topics or classes were in reference to the university or college level of leadership preparation.

13. What other topics or classes helped you prepare to lead schools toward equitable environments (at the university/college level)? * **Revised Question-**The rationale for this change was to communicate to the survey taker that the topics or classes were in reference to the university or college level of leadership preparation.

14.If you had a course or completed coursework in Cultural Competence in what way did it help you prepare for your current role?

- o Awareness of my own assumptions, biases, and beliefs
- o Valuing Diversity and working towards inclusiveness
- o Engage in difficult dialogue about meeting the needs of all students
- o Other_____

15.If you had a course or completed coursework in Equity, in what ways did it help you prepare for your current role?

- o Create school environments that are safe and secure for all students
- o Ensure high expectations for all students
- o Ensure all students get what they need, when they need it for success
- o Other_____

16. If you had a course or completed coursework in Social Justice, in what ways did it help you prepare for your current role?

- o Understanding of systemic oppression and privilege
- o Created a shared vision for all students benefiting academically
- o Advocate for students who are historically marginalized.
- o Other_____

17. Have you taken Cultural Proficiency Seminars offered by HCPSS?

- o Yes
- o No (Skip to Question 20)

18. If yes, then what type?

- o Level One- Awareness- CPD
- o Level One Awareness with School Team
- o Level Two- Application
- o Level Three - Facilitation

19. If you have taken cultural proficiency seminars offered by HCPSS, in what ways did it either prepare for your current role, or enhance your skills in this

role? (Check all that apply).

- o Awareness of my own assumptions, biases, and beliefs
- o Valuing Diversity and working towards inclusiveness
- o Engage in difficult dialogue about meeting the needs of all students
- o Create school environments that are safe and secure for all students
- o Ensure high expectations for all students
- o Ensure all students get what they need, when the need it for success
- o Understanding of systemic oppression and privilege
- o Created a shared vision for all students benefiting academically
- o Advocate for students who are historically marginalized.
- o Other_____

20. Have you taken other professional development either at HCPSS or in another school system that helped you prepare for your current role, or enhance your skills in this role? (Check all that apply).

A) Awareness of my own assumptions, biases, and beliefs
- o Yes
  If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it
  _____
- o No

B) Valuing Diversity and working towards inclusiveness
- o Yes
  If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it
  _____
- o No

C) Engage in difficult dialogue about meeting the needs of all students
- o Yes
  If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it
  _____
- o No

D) Create school environments that are safe and secure for all students
- o Yes
  If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it
  _____
- o No

E) Ensure high expectations for all students
- o Yes
  If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it
  _____
- o No

F) Ensure all students get what they need, when the need it for success
- o Yes
  If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it

_____

o No

G) Understanding of systemic oppression and privilege

o Yes

If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it

_____

o No

H) Creating a shared vision for all students benefiting academically

o Yes

If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it

_____

o No

J) Advocate for students who are historically marginalized.

o Yes

If yes, then describe what the PD was and who offered it

_____

o No

21.What other professional development have you taken that helps you with your leadership towards equitable and culturally proficiency environments?

_____

22.I believe cultural proficiency is important to valuing all students.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

23.I believe equity is important to increase student achievement for all our students.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

24.I believe social justice is important to correct unjust policies and practices for all students.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

25. I believe I have been adequately prepared to be an effective leader for diverse school communities.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

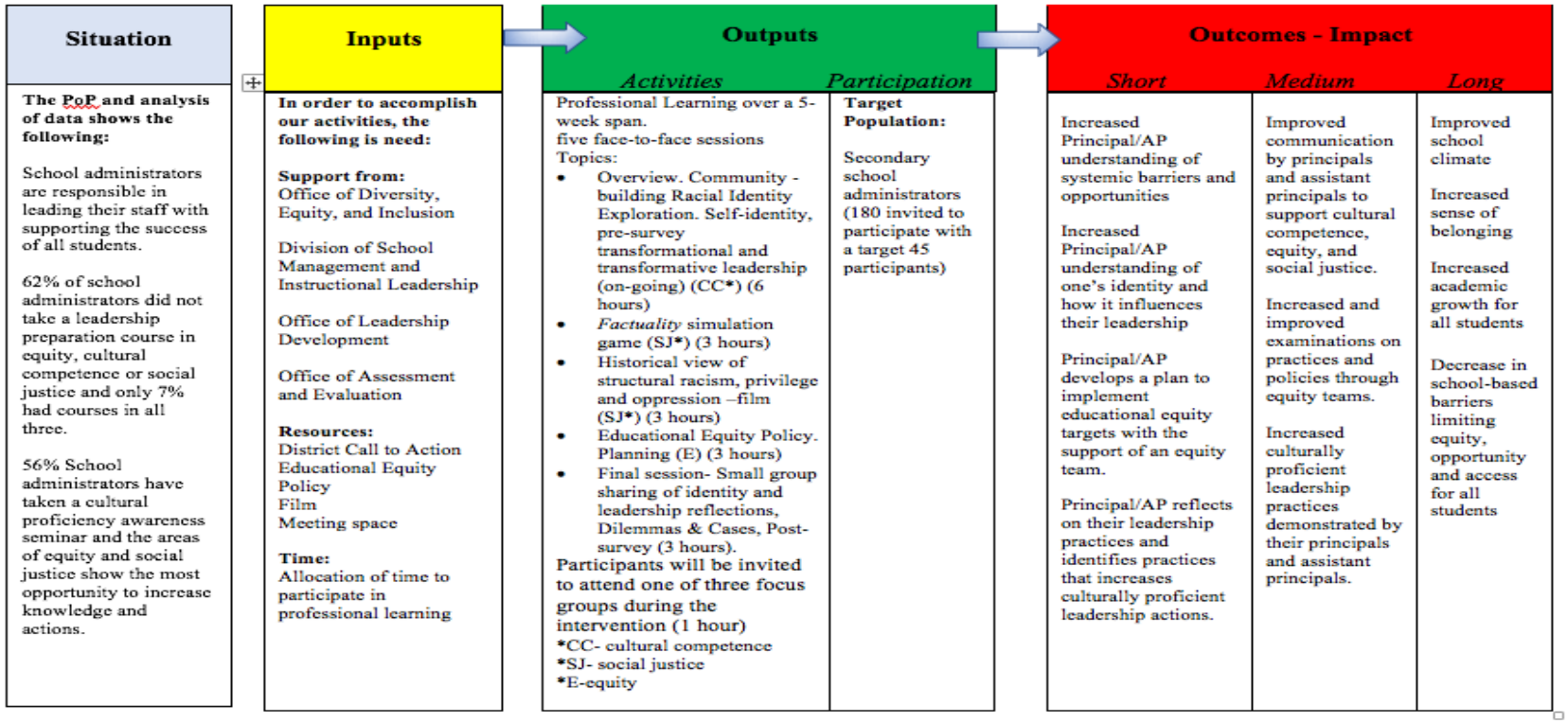
26.I believe the following values are essential to effectively leading diverse school communities:

27.I believe I have the skills to be an effective leader in school with diverse populations.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Logic Model-Supporting School Administrators with CP^{3}LPL



Appendix C

Summary of Process, Research Questions, and Data Analysis Plan

Study Questions	Data	Reflection Prompts	Frequency	Data Analysis
Process Questions				
PQ1: Was the professional learning delivered as designed?	Agendas Field Notes Facilitator Agenda		Field Notes jotted during sessions Reflective journal after each session Post-intervention	Document comparison of the original agendas and field notes indicating changes to the agenda Descriptive data on how may topics were covered as originally designed. Where the length of the sessions accommodated the learning objectives.

PQ2: In what ways did a professional learning designed for school administrators support their learning interests?	Feedback survey	1) What have you appreciated about the professional learning so far? 2) What are suggestions to improve the professional learning?	Survey sent after session three.	Survey results reviewed Inductive approach-explored codes for emergent themes
	Survey	The professional learning supported my learning interests. 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree The following aspects supported my professional learning interests (check) Opportunity to connect with other school administrators Content in the areas of equity, cultural competence, and social justice,	Collected after completion of all five sessions	Holistic Coding-chunking data into categories Univariate analysis with distribution and central tendency Two column to display the data that was and was not engaging. Quantifying the data if similar responses are emerging in the columns

Different activities-Just the Facts, Affinity Fish Bowl, Dialogue, Videos, Poems

Opportunity for self-reflections

Other

The professional learning was engaging.
1 Strongly Disagree
2 Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Agree
5 Strongly Agree

Please share what you found engaging or not engaging in the professional learning.

The professional learning provided me ways to reflect ab out my leadership actions for equity, cultural competence, and social justice.
1 Strongly Disagree
2 Disagree

3 Neutral
4 Agree
5 Strongly Agree

The professional learning provided me was to consider more leadership actions for equity, cultural competence and social justice.
1 Strongly Disagree
2 Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Agree
5 Strongly Agree

In what ways did the professional learning meet or not meet your hopes in our time together?

In what ways did the professional learning address or not address any concerns you had for our time together?

PQ3: How were the school administrators engaged in the professional learning?	Attendance records	Codes for absences (to distinguish from not attending for lack of engagement): V-Vacation I-Illness M-Meeting	At every session	Quantitative analysis, the number of attendee for each session will be compared Quanitizing- counting of codes if participants give rational for absence:
	Reflection Questions	What was it like for you to be in an Affinity Fishbowl? What emotions did you experience? What was challenging and/ or rewarding about this experience? What was it like for you to witness the fishbowl? What did you gain by bearing witness to the Affinity Group discussion? What was challenging or uncomfortable?	After Session Three	Priori Codes for Transformative learning: (a)Disorienting dilemma (b)Critical self-reflection (c)Sees distortions in beliefs, feelings, and attitudes
Research Questions				
RQ1: What was the change in school administrators'	Self-Reflections	1) Describe when you first became aware of	Session One	Self-reflections were reviewed and coded.

descriptions of their racial identity development as the result of professional learning on cultural competence?

your race and/or ethnicity.

2) In examining the Hoffman Integrated Racial Identity Model, reflect and write times in which you recall experiences in the different points on the model.
3) For the nest question expand to include reflection on identities in addition to race (i.e. gender, parent, sexual orientation, coach, athlete, religious, etc.)
4) In your role as a school administrator, which identities have served you well? Which of your identities have you minimized or not shared because of actual or perceived barriers to your leadership? In what ways have you navigated the complexity of you identity in your role as a leader?

Prior codes with the stage on the model were used:
(a) conformity,
(b) dissonance,
(c) acceptance,
(d) immersion,
(e) resistance,
(f) belonging,
(g) guilt/shame,
(h) identity,
(i) white privilege,
(k) integrative awareness

From the codes, themes were identified.

RQ2: What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about leading for equity as a result of professional learning on educational equity?	Discussion After Just the Facts reflection on schools Self-reflection	1) Reflecting on your own experiences in school, in what ways was your educational experience affected or not affected by the larger societal norms, laws, and policies? 2) What were pivotal experiences in your life (personal or professional) that led you to become a school administrator?	Session Two and Four-Leadership Reflections	Responses from the charts will be analyzed for patterns from the responses. The documents will be analyzed to look for
	Policy Purpose statement discussion	In what ways has the professional learning supported your leadership for equity?	During and after Session Four	
RQ3: What was the change in school administrators' beliefs about social justice affecting current educational outcomes as a result of professional learning?	Self-Reflection Discussion Field Notes	Reflection questions for the film. **Ch. 2 History** *"How many of our stories are left untold?"* What information was new to you?	Sessions One and Two Social Justice Cracking the Codes	Reflections and audio transcripts will be analyzed Inductive approach-explored codes for emergent themes. Codes from transformational learning and culturally proficient leadership were

What information did you learn outside of school, or in your adult life?

What feelings are you experiencing?

Chapter 3 Culture and Identity & Chapter 4 Bias *"Identity is complex- how we navigate it is complex."*

Which concepts in this segment resonate the most with you?

How do you describe your identity? In what ways do you believe people see all the aspect of you identities that are important to you ?

The film describes "whiteness" as the dominant cultural and societal norms in the U.S. In what ways has this affected the outcomes in schools?

used to identify leadership changes.

Culturally Proficient Leadership:

(a) Assessing self

(b) Valuing diversity

(c) Managing for differences

(d) Adapting for differences

(e) Institutionalizing cultural knowledge

(f) Inclusiveness

As a school administrator, in what ways have you learned about, supported, and promoted your culture, and the cultures of people in your school community?

What emotions did you experience during the game?

What experiences from your own life connected with this game?

What situations, ideas, concepts, and/ or barriers, elevated in this game are causing you to pause and critically reflect on your own experiences? What connections are you making to the experiences of the students in the school you lead?

Session Two- Just the Facts

Leadership Reflection Privilege & Embracing Risk

In what ways do you talk with your staff about

privilege? What has been the purpose of the conversations and what has been the outcome of the conversations?

How does this reflection of privilege inform your role and actions as a school administrator?

As a school administrator, in what ways do you embrace risk to disrupt barriers impeding success for marginalized students? To what extent do you believe you are able to take risks in our district? What have been positive and negative outcomes to risks you have taken?

In what ways has the professional learning supported your leadership for social justice?

RQ4: What is the change in school administrators culturally proficient leadership practices as a result of professional learning?	Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale	35-items from the survey are detailed in Table 23	Pre-and Post-Intervention	Paired T-test The data will be cleaned and uploaded into SPSS for analysis. The mean scores for the items will be calculated pre- and post-intervention to determine if statistically significant changes were evident from the PL

Appendix D

CP³LPL

Cultural Proficiency³ Leadership Professional Learning

5 SESSIONS–ONLINE (12 HRS)

Synchronous & Asynchronous

In order to have optimal conditions for the study, participants are expected to attend all sessions and complete a 15 minute pre- and post- online survey. Involvement in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any point in the process.

As a part of a doctoral study through Johns Hopkins University, this research-based professional learning is designed to bolster the will and skills of school administrators in leading their dynamic school communities' diverse needs. This innovative design advances the learning interests of school administrators in a collaborative learning community comprised of peers. Ranging from self-reflections, dialogues, to a new simulation game, the advantages of this professional learning are the following:

- Synchronous & asynchronous distance sessions
- Examine experiences affecting one's leadership, including racial identity
- Examine broader perspective affecting current educational outcomes, including redlining and additional structural barriers
- Strengthen leadership skills to enact change for equitable educational outcomes
- Raffle prizes- $10 gift cards at each session and $25 gift at the final session for participants who attended all five sessions.

The dates and times: To Be Determined

PARTICIPANTS ARE NEEDED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING THAT:

SUPPORTS YOUR LEADERSHIP PRACTICES TO LEAD FOR EQUITY

SUPPORTS PSEL STANDARDS FOR EQUITY & CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

For Questions Contact:
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Appendix E

Prewrite for the poem
Use the following categories to list specific details related to you. The key is making this as specific and personal as possible. Use nicknames or words that only you or your family use. Don't worry about readers not knowing what you're talking about.

a) Parent's names and significant relatives

b) Special foods or meals

c) Family specific games or activities

d) Nostalgic songs

e) Stories, novels or poetry that you'll never forget

f) Phrases that were repeated often

g) The best things that you were told

h) The worst things that you have been told

i) Ordinary household items

j) Family traditions

k) Family traits

l) Family tendencies

m) Religious symbols or experiences

n) Specific story(ies) about a specific family member that influenced you

o) Accidents or traumatic experiences

p) Losses

q) Joys

r) Location of memories, pictures, or mementos

Appendix F

I am Poem Template, created by the Razia Kosi adapted from different templates

I am: (two special characteristics you have)

I am from: (a place, area, or country you are from)

I am from: (an object from your home and a childhood memory)

I am from: (a phrase you heard the people who raise you say)

I am from: (names of ancestors or people who you looked up to)

I am: (a tradition you grew up with, music you listened to, shows that you watched)

I am from: (two food you ate growing up)

I wonder: (something you are curious about)

I hear, I see: (a sound and vision you imagine)

I feel: (feelings you hold deep in your heart)

I worry: (something that keeps you up at night with worry)

I cry: (something that makes you cry)

I fear: (something that fills you with fear)

I understand: (something that you know is true)

I dream: (something that give you imagine)

I try: (something that you make an effort to do)

I will: (something that you commit to do)

I value: (a belief or characteristic you value)

I hope: (something that gives you hope)

I champion: (something you lead with great pride)

I am: (two special characteristics about you)

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Curriculum Vitae

Razia F. Kosi, EdD, LCSW-C

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EDUCATION

EdD, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Johns Hopkins University, School of Education 2020
Dissertation: Examining School Administrators Culturally Proficient Leadership Practices- From Self Awareness to Collective Efficacy
Dissertation Co Advisors: Dr. Karen Karp and Dr. Wendy Osefo
Dr. Chrissy Eith (third reader), Dr. Ranjani JohnBull (fourth reader)

ME Certificate- Johns Hopkins University, 2005
Administration and Teacher Supervision

MSW, Social Work, University of Maryland, 1995
Concentration: Clinical/Administration
Specialization: Families and Children

B.A., University of Maryland, 1989
Double major: Psychology and Radio/Television & Film

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2008-Present- Facilitator, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Howard County Public School System

2001-2014-Executive Director, Counselors Helping (South) Asians/Indians, Inc. (CHAI)

2007-2008-Resource Teacher-Alternative Education Programs

2005-2007-School Mental Health Therapist

2002-2004-Grants Facilitator, Howard County Public School System

1999-2002-Alternative Educator/School Mental Health Therapist, Howard County Public School System

HONORS AND AWARDS

Howard County Women's Commission Hall of Fame-Inducted March 2012
Avon Hello Tomorrow Award for Women Leaders- Awarded September 2008
Alpha Phi Alpha Charles H. Chapman Award for Clinical Counselor of the Year-2007

PUBLICATIONS

Krownapple, J. , Kosi, R., Keeny, S. (2010) Education Leadership*, Closing Opportunity Gaps: Questioning Our Beliefs and Biases,* Vol 68 (3) retrieved from: http://www.ascd.org/

Rao, V., Goga, J., Inscore, A., Kosi, R., Khushalani, S., Rastogi, P., ... & Jayaram, G. (2011). Attitudes towards mental illness and help-seeking behaviors among South Asian Americans: Results of a pilot study. *Asian journal of psychiatry*, *4*(1), 76.

Rastogi, P., Khushalani, S., Dhawan, S., Goga, J., Hemanth, N., Kosi, R., ... & Rao, V. (2014). Understanding clinician perception of common presentations in South Asians seeking mental health treatment and determining barriers and facilitators to treatment. *Asian journal of psychiatry*, *7*, 15-21.

Shah, S. A., & Kosi, R. (2012). Diversity in Groups: Culture, Ethnicity and Race. *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Group Psychotherapy*, 667-680.

Co-Editor and contributing author of Tree of Life-Parenting Resource Book for South Asian Americans, Printed 2015.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Professor, Johns Hopkins University, 2015-2016

- Culturally Responsive Teaching (Masters course)

Adjunct Professor, McDaniel College, 2014-2016

- Race and Ethnicity in American Education (Masters course)

Teaching Assistant, Johns Hopkins University, 2019-2020

- Multicultural Education (Doctoral course)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2019- Panelist at South by Southwest Education Conference- Youth Voice- Sparking Synergy for Inclusive Change
- 2018- Presenter-at Division on South Asian Americans Conference-Difficult Dialogues: Dissecting Identities of South Asian Women
- 2017- Panelist South Asian Millennials Conference, Yale University
- 2015- Keynote- HCPSS Cultural Proficiency Liaisons Forum
- 2015- Panelist National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI-NJ) Coming Out, Coming Home: South Asian Family Acceptance and LGBTQ Youth, Rutgers University
- 2014-Invited Speaker at On New Shores Conference, Toronto, CA - Presented on the CHAI Parenting Initiative
- 2013-Invited Speaker at the South Asian Awareness Network Conference-Presented on Addressing Mental Health from a Social Justice Perspective

- 2012-Presenter at the Asian American Psychological Association Annual Conference- Innovations to Reaching out to the South Asian Community.
- 2011, Invited Discussant for Division 35- Division on Women at the APA Conference, Washington, DC.
- 2011, Presenter at the Cultural Proficiency Institute, Orange County, CA2011, Faculty at American Group Psychotherapy Association annual meeting, NY, NY
- 2010, Presenter at the Asian American Psychological Association Conference, San Diego, CA
- 2010, Speaker at the Indo American Psychiatric Association Scientific Conference.
- 2008, Panel Presenter at Georgetown University Law Center- Breaking the Silence on Domestic Violence in the South Asian community
- 2007, Presented on Mental Health Issues for Asian Populations- at the University of Maryland- FUEL Conference sponsored by the Asian Student Union.
- 2007, Panel Presenter- at the Center for the Asian American Study on Health at New York University, workshop on Innovative Strategies for Working with Asian Populations
- 2007, Panel Presenter at the Asian American Psychological Association- workshop Creating the Mosaic-Building Community Collaborations in the South Asian Community
- 2007, Presented on Mental Health at the University of Maryland's FUEL (Forging, understanding and empowering leaders) Conference sponsored by the Asian American Student Union
- Presenter at the annual statewide Multicultural Education Conference in Maryland. Workshop on "South Asian Students and Education."
- 2005, "Cultural Competency and Developmental Assets" and "Generational and Educational Issues of South Asians in the U.S." for the curriculum staff as part of the on-going training on cultural competency
- 2005 EAP Mid-Atlantic Region Meeting, topic "South Asians in the U.S."
- 2005 International Teen Forum at World Bank in Washington, DC, topic: "Cultural and Acculturation"
- 2005 South Asian Awareness Conference at the University of Michigan on "South Asians and Mental Health."
- 2004 Korean Family Night in Howard County Public School System- Presented on Developmental Assets with the Korean communities.
- Presented at the Montgomery County Conference on Cultural Competency, "The Who, Where, and Why of the South Asian Identity."
- 2001: Conducted Workshop "Post September 11th: Coping with the Mental Health Crisis". Facilitated panel discussion at the University of Maryland in Baltimore
- 2002, and 2001: Presented Workshop on " Emotion and the Brain: Examining the Latest Brain Research and Effects on Learning" Presented at Oakland Mills High School, and County -wide at Alternative Education Workshop

- Diversity Film Series - "Miss India Georgia"- issues facing South Asian Women and bi-culturalism, presented to NASW-MD
- 1998 - Presented " Examining our Cultural Lenses" - cultural diversity workshop presented at NASW-MD

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Chair of Leadership and Growth Committee- Asian American Educators of Howard County-2020
- Chief Financial Officer-Asian American Psychological Association-2014-2016
- Howard County LGBT Roundtable-2015
- Treasurer for Division on South Asian Americans in the Asian American Psychological Association-2010-2014
- Advisory Board for Teaching Tolerance Magazine 2012-2014
- Howard County Ethnic Community Roundtable-2012-2015
- Communications Officer for the Division on South Asian Americans 2008-2010
- Advisory Board Member to the Dean of Social Work at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, 2005-2008
- 1998-2000 Co-leader of Committee on Diversity and Multicultural Affairs for NASW-MD

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- 2020 Volunteer Columbia Community Care
- 2008-2012 Volunteer at MCC Medical Clinic
- 2007-2008, served on the Governor O'Malley's Child & Family Services Interagency Strategic Plan Partners Council
- 2000 to 2003 Faculty Advisor to Oakland Mills High School's Human Relation Club and Rainbow Nation Club.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

National Association of Social Workers
Asian American Psychological Association
Asian American Educators of Howard County
Division of South Asian Americans in the AAPA

LANGUAGES

English: Native Language
Tamil: Conversational Speaker

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Office, WordPress, Google Analytics, Social Media, Publisher, Google Slides, Excel